

Varsity

20  
YEARS



# Dear Alumni,

It is my honour to celebrate the 20th birthday of *Varsity*, which is possibly one of the most successful and best-recognized practicum magazine among the local journalist profession, our alumni and the general public. The inauguration of the monthly English practicum *Varsity* in magazine format with a full-colour cover in March 1993 marked a new era of practicum for our School. It set a successful model for the monthly Chinese practicum magazine *U-Beat*, which was launched in November 1995.

From a magazine that built up its professional image through covering news in the campuses of the territory, *Varsity* has evolved into a general public-affairs-cum-culture magazine in the past two

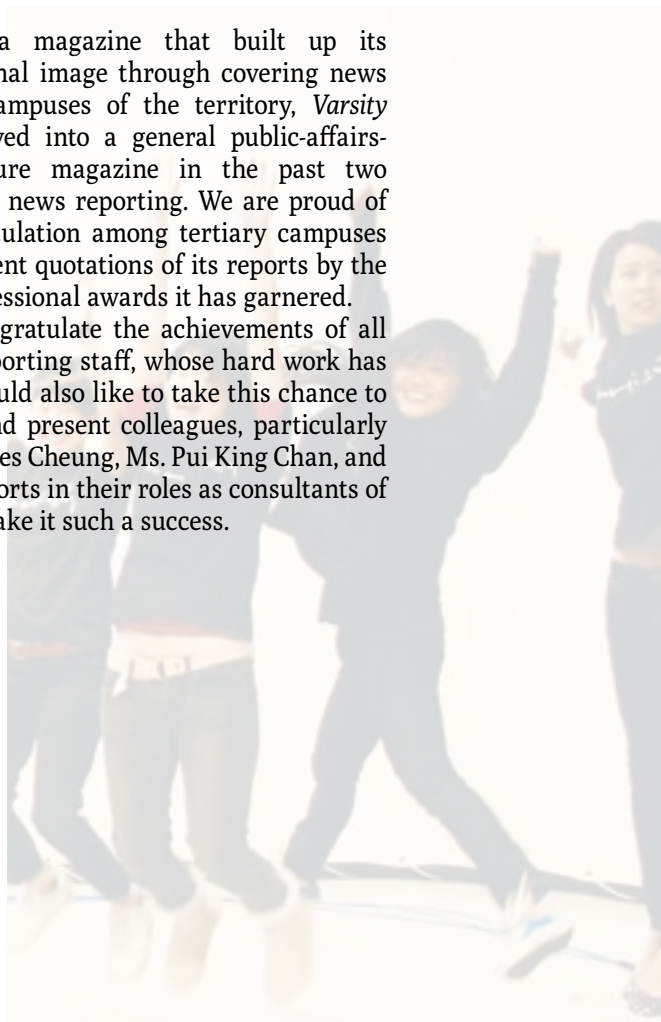
decades while retaining its strength in campus news reporting. We are proud of its achievements, as evidenced by its wide circulation among tertiary campuses and secondary schools in Hong Kong, the frequent quotations of its reports by the mainstream news media and the numerous professional awards it has garnered.

On behalf of the School, I would like to congratulate the achievements of all *Varsity*'s former and incumbent editorial and reporting staff, whose hard work has been rewarded through these recognitions. I would also like to take this chance to express our gratitude toward all our former and present colleagues, particularly Prof. Bryce McIntyre, Prof. Robert Stone, Ms. Agnes Cheung, Ms. Pui King Chan, and Ms. Yuen Chan, who have dedicated immense efforts in their roles as consultants of *Varsity* and mentors of its student members to make it such a success.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Y.H. Fung'.

Anthony Y.H. Fung, Ph.D.  
Professor and Director  
School of Journalism and Communication







# Greetings from the Vice-Chancellor

I was a little puzzled when the Chief Editor of the *Varsity* magazine asked me to write a congratulatory message for their 20th anniversary issue. Given the magazine's nature and editorial style, it came as a happy surprise that the editors would want an article, however brief, from the Vice-Chancellor, informality and avoidance of academic stuffiness being the hallmarks of their publication over all these years. I am of course most pleased to contribute, and it is a delight writing alongside Mrs Gwen Kao.

Among the many magazines published on campus, *Varsity* impresses not so much by its unique format and colourful covers, but by its contents which are always varied and inclusive, and an editorial stance that is light-hearted and occasionally unconventional and irreverent. Like all good magazines (and unlike many other campus publications) there is no uniformity in the style of writing, but most articles show the freshness and vibrancy of jeunesse, and make for very pleasant reading that reminds us of the magazine's prototype and namesake, the *Varsity* of Cambridge University, which first came out in the 1940's and is still in circulation. Our *Varsity* also distinguishes itself by its boldness in tackling with subjects that are taboos, and delving into details which might prove to be too embarrassing for other vehicles of campus news to carry. In short, this is a journal compiled by young people for those who are young at heart, but it does not do so at the expense of depth or seriousness.

As *Varsity* celebrates its 20th anniversary, I look forward to its continued prosperity and popularity among the campus population. As one way of going forward, I would also like to suggest that its editors consider circulation in the community at large, when the time is ripe.



Joseph J Y Sung  
Vice-Chancellor and President

## Words from Gwen Kao

Journalists report from some of the world's most dangerous places today. Without their fearless dedication to their craft, we would not be aware of the tragedies and violations of human rights that happen in our world.

Students in the field of communications have many choices for their careers. They can join this adventurous band on the frontlines of war and disaster, or stay on the home front. But even from the relative safety of the home front, they must be dedicated in their search for truth.

Over the years, I have met and been interviewed by many of our local newspaper reporters. Some people refer to the media as 'the doggie band'! They follow the famous in packs, thrusting mics aggressively in people's faces. Quite naturally, each reporter wants to be the first with a leading story or to report a comment they overhear. As in any career, success goes to the brave.

It has been my fortune to have met the caring ones. They are thoughtful in how they write a story - with care and compassion. They give a balanced view. It is important for the public to have access to such opinions and not just the sensational stuff of gossip and innuendo.

In the past twenty years, from the first issue of CUHK's *Varsity* until the present day, there must be many out in the world who have worked on this magazine. Where are they all now?

To all past, present and future contributors to this magazine, I wish them success and happiness in all their endeavours. It is a pleasure to know that *Varsity* has grown and matured to its present status.

Gwen Kao



*Mrs Kao is the co-founder, along with her husband, Nobel laureate in Physics and former Vice-Chancellor of the Chinese University of Hong Kong Professor Charles Kao, of The Charles K. Kao Foundation for Alzheimer's Disease.*

*As Vice-Chancellor, Professor Kao personally approved the funding that made the establishment of Varsity possible.*

# The Early Days

*"Fishing for Memories"*  
April 2011 // Varsity Issue 120  
Photo by John Yip, Joana U, Charlie Leung







# The early days of *Varsity* Magazine: *Remembrances*

Bryce T. McIntyre

In 1991 I was unemployed and living a bucolic life in my cherry orchard in the Pacific Northwest of the United States, and I was looking for a job in academia. I saw an ad for a position at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, so I applied for the post thinking that it would probably come to nothing.

But much to my surprise, after falling asleep late one night, I was awakened by a telephone call from Hong Kong. I don't recall who interviewed me at the time – I was very sleepy, if truth be known -- but I think one of the two or three interviewers must have been Prof. Leonard Chu, who was chairman of the JLM Department at the time. (Yes, we used the title “chairman”, and it used to be a department.)

Anyway, the men who interviewed me asked if I could assist in establishing an English language student newspaper at CUHK. I thought this would be easy for me, having worked in the newspaper business and also having taught journalism at the university level, so I said yes.

The interview ended without commitment on either side, and I went back to sleep thinking that it would probably come to nothing.

But much to my surprise, about four weeks later, I received a lengthy three-year contract in the mail to teach at CUHK, and I was given one week to sign it and return the paperwork.

At first I was filled with trepidation: My environment in Oregon was quiet and rural – only 16 people per square mile – and Hong Kong is one of the world's greatest and most bustling cities. I read that some parts of Hong Kong like Mong Kok had a population of 160,000 people per square kilometer! I did not know how I would survive the congestion and the noise.

On the other hand, I knew a move to Hong Kong would be a lifetime adventure, and I am an adventuresome sort, so I signed the contract and returned it to Hong Kong by Speedpost.

The man who hired me was indeed Prof. Leonard Chu, who today is a professor at National Chengchi University in Taipei. After I returned

my contract by Speedpost, Prof. Chu wrote to me to welcome me to the JLM staff, and in that letter he gave me my Chinese name, Mak Ging Tai. When I showed up for work on 2 September 1991, Prof. Joseph Chan met me at Kai Tak Airport and drove me to the CUHK campus guest house.

Much to my surprise, the chairman when I walked into the department the next day was not Prof. Chu, but Prof. George Comstock, a well known American scholar. I had long admired his writing, but I had never met him in person, so it was a pleasure and an honour to serve under him.

Now all eyes were on me as I worked out details for an English language student practicum publication. I had to develop a design, identify the target audience, decide on staffing, develop a budget, decide on a production system and a printer. And so on and so on.

As a first step, I wrote a proposal called the United States Student Newspaper Production Model, based on my experiences with university student newspapers in the U.S.



Editorial Board  
May 1998 // *Varsity* Issue 43



Editorial Board  
May 2000 // *Varsity* Issue 58

“After I returned my contract my Speedpost, Prof. [Leonard] Chu wrote to me to welcome me to the JLM staff, and in that letter he gave me my Chinese name, Mak Ging Tai.”

The plan called for a 4-day per week student tabloid newspaper printed in black and white on newsprint. This was standard for student newspapers on U.S. university campuses. Costs would be covered by a small, part-time student-run advertising department headed by a full-time professional advertising manager. Advertising staff would receive a small salary and receive commissions on ad sales. All editorial and production, except printing, would be done by student staff members. The target audience would be students on university campuses in Hong Kong. There were only three universities at the time.

A lot of my ideas did not pass muster, so to speak. My JLM colleagues told me there was no way CUHK students would work so hard as to put out a daily newspaper, and there was only lukewarm interest in drawing on advertising courses for practicum credit in advertising.

On a more positive note, I was deeply impressed by the students in my English news reporting and English news editing classes. I needed to draw on their energy to get the project off the ground, so I gave the editing class my basic proposal in the spring of 1992 and asked them to come up with a plan that they could live with. I divided the class into four teams of six people each, and I asked each team to develop a proposal and make a presentation to the faculty.

Late in the spring, the teams made their presentations, the faculty members who were present made a decision, and this was the birth of *Varsity* – a monthly newsmagazine targeting the university community of Hong Kong. The name of the magazine, the basic design, the target audience, the proposed editorial departments were all conceived by the team from the editing class. I believe this team was headed by Esther Wong, who was an outstanding student.

So far, so good. But I also needed money. Prof. Comstock asked me to

develop a budget, so I wrote one in the autumn of 1992 for HK\$140,000 to cover the first year of operations. Prof. Comstock and I took the proposal to the vice-chancellor at the time, Prof. Charles Kuen Kao. Prof. Kao approved the budget and, in time, he became one of *Varsity's* most ardent supporters.

The next big hurdle was setting up a production system. At a university in Los Angeles, before I came to Hong Kong, I was in charge of planning and funding all computer labs for my college. In one lab in 1989, we had Apple and IBM desktop publishing systems running side-by-side, and the verdict was that the IBM system was superior.

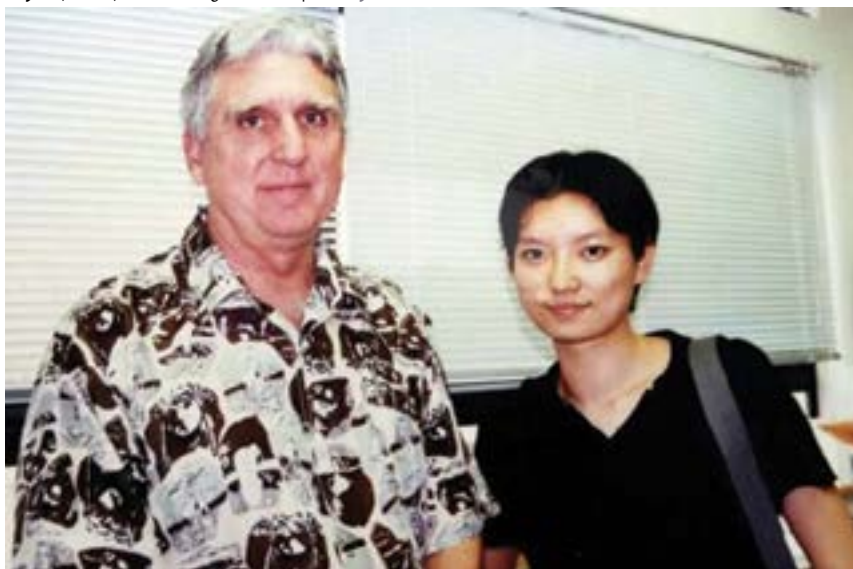
Naturally, I drew upon my experiences in LA in deciding on a production system at CUHK, but the JLM department had no computers for student use. It also had no desktop publishing software, no scanners, no network, and no technical support. In the English news reporting and editing classes, students at that time had to check out small portable typewriters from the general office before class and return them after class. That was how technologically behind we were.

We did not have computers, but we did have typewriters, so one quick way to get off the ground was to buy a flatbed scanner that could scan typewritten material. I could find only one flatbed scanner for sale in all of Hong Kong, at an HP distributor. I went to the HP offices for a demonstration, and the staff there did not even know how to operate it. I bought the scanner anyway





Bryce (center) with 1995 graduates | Mandy Luk



Bryce with Mei Chi So in 1994 | Mei Chi So



Bryce with 2003 graduate, Crystal Yip | Crystal Yip

and brought it back to the JLM department. We connected it to a single computer in the JLM main office, and suddenly we had a primitive desktop publishing system. Most of the hardware and software problems, of which there were many, were solved by Peter Li, an outstanding student in one of my editing classes.

The next major problem was finding a company that could output our computer files as films for stripping and platemaking. This was very difficult because of software problems and incompatible hardware. We went to two or three different output companies – and two or three different printing companies -- before we finally settled on C&C Offset in Tai Po.

So, after many trials and tribulations, we finally published the first issue in March 1993. Subsequently, *Varsity* acquired a life of its own and took off like a well-oiled machine. Its success surprised even me. One of our greatest achievements was to become the first online publication in Hong Kong, long before the establishment of the World Wide Web.

During all those years, from 1991 until my retirement in 2004, I always asked the students to lead the way, and they never disappointed me. No matter how difficult the task at hand, no matter how great the challenge, they always threw a lot of energy into each issue. It was my honor to serve as their mentor, but *Varsity's* success is due to their commitment and dedication, and it is the students who deserve all the credit.

*Blossom Ridge Vineyard  
Salem, Oregon, USA*

# Days of Our Lives

Mark Wong

**I**t was the beginning of autumn in 1994 when Dr. Joseph Chan and Dr. Bryce McIntyre hired me as the business manager for *Varsity*. It was also a time when I was giving myself a short break from work after my departure from my own media firm in Hong Kong.

After years of marketing some of the leading international and regional newspapers and magazines across the world, I was suddenly offered a job to bring in revenue and assist in the publishing of a relatively new magazine with small circulation called *Varsity*. The immediate challenge for me was not the publishing project in front of me, but to convince myself to take a step backward to explore a new environment, and to start from scratch. What I did not realize was that the time I spent on *Varsity* turned out to be the best part of my career.

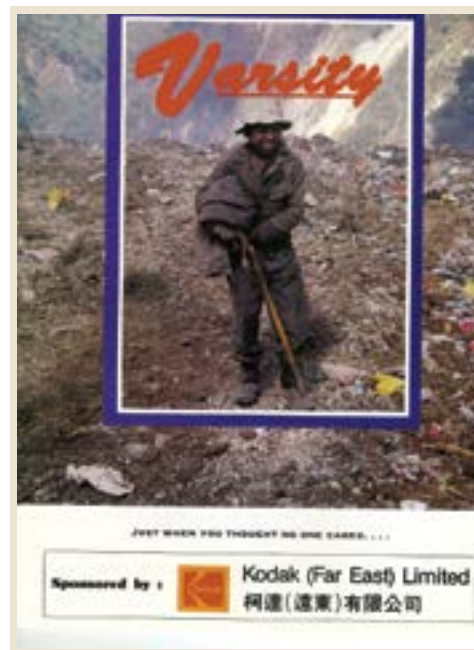
My eight plus years at CUHK gave me the satisfaction of working with wonderful colleagues and building good and long lasting friendship with

students, not to mention the joy of seeing the happy faces of our reporters and editors each time the magazine was published. *Varsity* was what made all these possible.

In the early days of *Varsity*, before a vendor was hired to handle distribution of the magazine, I had to deliver heavy loads of *Varsity* to various spots on campus once the magazines were delivered to campus from the printing company. It was not an easy task for me as it involved a lot of lifting and bending - so there was always the risk of back pain. But seeing the enthusiastic response from students who wanted to be the first to get the magazine was like getting a dose of medication that could immediately re-energise me.

The days and nights I spent in the computer lab helping *Varsity* students overcome their problems gave me the most unforgettable memories. I could feel their stress that came from meeting deadlines and encountering obstacles. My role was to provide

Advertisement created by  
Bryce for Varsity  
Mark Wong |



encouragement and support. On my part, I also had to co-ordinate with the editors-in-chief on the layout and pagination of the magazine, especially on the positioning of advertising pages. They in turn showed their appreciation to me when they saw a good number of ad pages.

Bryce and I also came up with ideas to encourage and motivate students such as holding the annual awards dinner at Shaw's Guest House, and to make plates to honour the awards recipients. The plates were displayed outside the general office. I was recently reminded of the impact of those plates by a former *Varsity* student.

Almost seventeen years have passed since her *Varsity* days and she is now teaching in Australia. She told me that she still looks for those plates each time she visits CUHK. She was proud to tell me that her name appeared on the plates both as reporter and editor. Her passion for *Varsity* brings her back to CUHK almost every year. She also takes the time to visit Bryce and myself in the U.S. as much as she can.

Another source of fond memories from my days with *Varsity* comes from the tours to commercial publishing

groups in Hong Kong such as South China Morning Post and Apple Daily. I organized those tours each year for students to see the operations of those publishing firms and to give them the opportunity to share experience with the CEOs or chief editors there. It was a rewarding activity for students and a fun experience on my part. Some of the CEOs had known me for years before I joined CUHK and it was like a reunion for me.

Consolidating advertising for *Varsity* was not a requirement for *Varsity* students but Bryce always emphasized the importance of advertising revenue to students. On my part, I organized Pinpoint Advertising for students who were interested to learn more about advertising and media marketing, or to participate in voluntary advertising work for *Varsity*. I always believe that a good advertising or sales presentation could prepare students to present themselves well in their career paths. Bryce, out of his own creation, also produced a very memorable and touching advertisement for the magazine.


My career took me to various occupations and each one is so

unique and so different from the others. I started my first job in Hong Kong with a TV station, followed by a marketing position in the movie industry, then came advertising, media representation, publishing, education, social work, and more recently law enforcement in the United States. Among all my encounters with various jobs, *Varsity* gave me the most joy and fulfillment from work, and self-discovery in life. No other job could compare with it.

On this 20th anniversary of *Varsity*, I must give my hats off to everyone who put their hard work and passion into the magazine. Without the hard work and passion, a project that started with a small budget would not survive twenty years and still be going strong.

Without *Varsity*, I would not have experienced the most enriching time of my life.

Life isn't always made to order. *Varsity's* experience, if nothing else, let me know what could be ordered in life.

What a wonderful world. 

Mark Wong was the  
Business Manager for *Varsity*.  
He currently resides in the United States.



# The Tale of Varsity Memoir of an “Old Ghost”

Mandy Luk

One, two, three... Ding! The elevator stopped. As the door was slowly opening, we saw porn-movie posters, lots of them, right in front of us. Tracy Chan, *Varsity's* first photo editor, took a few quick shots as we stepped out of the elevator door. “We have to go,” I said as I kept pressing the “down” button frantically. Student girls, with SLR cameras on us, really stood out in a hotspot selling porn videos and DVDs. We dashed back to the elevator when the door reopened again. Yet, we were not fast enough. Two tattooed men squeezed in at the last second.

“Who are you?” one of them asked. Tracy and I were biting our lips. We did not utter a word. “What are you doing here?” The men stepped a bit closer. Feeling the pressure, I knew I needed to buy time. “We are students.” I could hear my voice trembling. Tracy held on to her camera a bit tighter. “We are here for a project”. The school project was *Varsity*. It was 1993. One of the pictures Tracy took that day made its way to *Varsity's* first issue. The story of *Varsity* was just beginning.

“When he [Bryce] walked into our editing class one day and told us to help launch an English magazine, I think all, if not 99 per cent of the class thought he was joking. „

## Ground Zero

*“Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine and at last you create what you will.” – George Bernard Shaw, playwright and co-founder of London School of Economics.*

When I started my English reporting class back in the 1990s, we practiced writing news story on typewriters. We designed and drew our thumbnails by hand on paper. We took black and white pictures. We developed the film in a darkroom. There were no computer labs. There were no digital cameras. And, there was no *Varsity*.

It all began with one man's ambition and vision. His name is Bryce McIntyre – my mentor, our lecturer of English reporting/editing class and the true founder of *Varsity*.

## The Mentor

Bryce was a relatively new lecturer in the department at the time. He was as new as a freshman like me. If I recall correctly, he was also new to Hong Kong too. Unlike many newbies, instead of staying the course, he chose a very different path.

When he walked into our editing class one day and told us to help launch an English magazine, I think all, if not 99 per cent, of the class thought he was joking. The idea to launch a publication from ground zero within a year was a bold idea. To Bryce, it was no joke.

And, he did not leave us drifting on our own. From conceptualization to design, from story selection to editing, he was there every step of the way. To me, he was more than a teacher.

I was a hopeless perfectionist (I probably still am). I got stressed out easily. And, I was frustrated if someone missed a deadline or the contrast of a picture was off. I was grumpy and jittery all the time. Bryce always lent me his ear and was there to calm me down.

And, he was determined and fearless when it came to fighting for resources.

In those days, if we wanted to use the computers, we had to sign up at the administration office and book a time slot. There were only a few computers inside the office which students could access. By the time of the launch, we had a computer room with dozens of computers. I did not know what happened behind the scenes. However,

I know we would not have that kind of luxury without Bryce.

## The Partner

The second person, who made the launch possible, was *Varsity's* first Chief Editor and my classmate Peter Li. I confess that when Peter was first elected as the Chief Editor, I was disappointed and unconvinced. I thought I was as good as him or even better. Yet, I was wrong.

Yes, editorially, we might be close. However, I trailed far behind him technologically. And, being tech-savvy was most important and crucial for the successful launch of *Varsity*.

If you flipped through a debut copy of *Varsity*, you probably wonder why some of the pictures were oddly distorted and seriously pixelated. Many of the line alignments were less than perfect. Basically, according to today's standards, none of those images would be allowed to get to the printers.

I remember I was always the one who was fixated on those simple-and-naïve graphics and out-of-focus photos. I wanted them fixed. Peter was the only sane voice between the two of us. He would simply tell me, "take it or leave it" as he was well aware of the technological limits and he knew it would be a waste of time to make those pixels go away or try to align all those lines seamlessly.

We used Pagemaker as our software, a brand new publishing tool then. None of us really knew how different features worked, except Peter. In

addition to all the crazy hours he spent to put the magazine together, he was also our team's on-call technical consultant.

Frankly, if I were the Chief Editor, I doubt if *Varsity* would have had been launched before my graduation!


## The Future

Twenty years is a long time. As much as I want to deny it, I am now an "old ghost". As an immigrant, my career in English media in a "foreign" country is full of twists and turns.

That is another story.

However, all these years, the training at *Varsity* has never left me. I know "the sky is the limit" when it comes to creativity. I know how to maximize limited resources to deliver the best results. I easily adapt to the ever-changing shifts and the overtime in my line of work, thanks to those countless hours it took to produce *Varsity*. It may sound cliché but my days at *Varsity* truly laid a solid foundation for my journalism career.

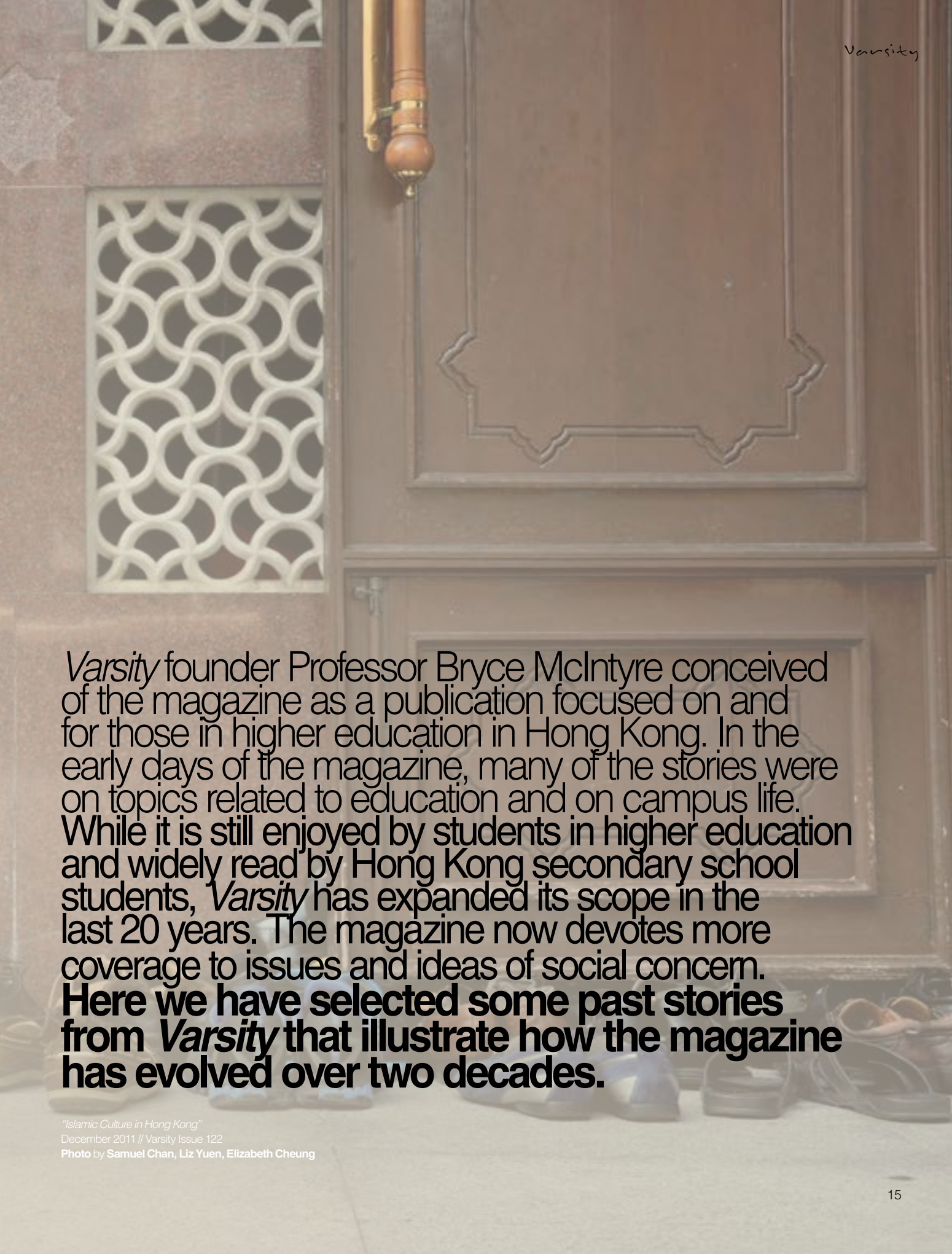
As *Varsity* is turning 20, it has gone online, like any media in this new digital age. It has a professional layout. It has a nice selection of news stories. It connects to its readers via various social media. It represents a new generation of vision. I strongly believe it will continue to grow and inspire as it has done in the past two decades.

The story of *Varsity* will continue. 

*Mandy Luk was Varsity's first Managing Editor. She is now a producer at CBC News Network in Toronto.*

# *Varsity* Vault





*Varsity* founder Professor Bryce McIntyre conceived of the magazine as a publication focused on and for those in higher education in Hong Kong. In the early days of the magazine, many of the stories were on topics related to education and on campus life. While it is still enjoyed by students in higher education and widely read by Hong Kong secondary school students, *Varsity* has expanded its scope in the last 20 years. The magazine now devotes more coverage to issues and ideas of social concern. **Here we have selected some past stories from *Varsity* that illustrate how the magazine has evolved over two decades.**

"Islamic Culture in Hong Kong"

December 2011 // *Varsity* Issue 122

Photo by Samuel Chan, Liz Yuen, Elizabeth Cheung

From its inception, *Varsity* was concerned about campus life and the everyday concerns and interests of Hong Kong's university students. This story from Issue 7 was published in April 1994 and looks at the culture surrounding campus **ghost stories**. Stories that continue to be told and retold even today.



# DEAD ZONE

**H**earing the dozens of ghost stories on college campuses, one might conclude Hong Kong's campuses are haunted. But local ghostbusters think the spooky stories say more about university students than about paranormal events.

Here is a widely circulated ghost story from Hong Kong Polytechnic:

"Strange things have happened frequently ever since a boy who was a son of a foreign lecturer drowned at the school's swimming pool," said Mr. Ken Au, a student at Hong Kong Poly.

"Some students say they always see several foreign boys swimming at the pool, even during closed sessions"

"Some have reported and complained that they saw a drowning boy, but the lifeguards did not try to save him. But the reason for the lifeguards' not saving the child is that nobody is drowning"

"Because of the strange things that have happened," continued Mr. Au, "the lower halves of the glass of the canteen are now covered with semi-

transparent stickers."

Another Hong Kong Poly student added this to the story:

"The glass of the canteen is covered with semi-transparent material because some students said they saw a boy swimming at the very bottom of the pool who never come up again," said Mr. Andrew Tsang.

And there is this from Mr. Paul Chang, also a student from Hong Kong Poly:

— **CAMPUS LIFE**  
Issue 7, April 1994  
Text **Margaret Liu**



"Some students found a boy swimming in the pool during a closed session, but he soon got out. Driven by curiosity, they followed the boy to the changing room, yet nobody – no sign of any person – was found, as the floor was totally dry."

"It is said that the boy was the ghost of the

**"The girl's heart was broken because her lover did not show up for their elopement, so she jumped into the pond and died. ,,"**

lecturer's 12 year old, drowned son," said Mr. Chang.

Another venue of ghost stories is the Chinese University of Hong Kong. One of the best-known stories there is about "the girl with the braid".

"A girl who wears her hair in a braid is often seen (on the campus)," said Mr. Pegasus Mak, a Chinese University student. "If you approach her from the rear and she turns around, you can only see a blank place where her face should be."

"It is said that, many years ago, the girl took a train from China to Hong Kong. She jumped off the train somewhere near Chung Chi College at The Chinese University because the lights there made her think she had arrived in the city. Unfortunately, her braid was torn off by the train, and she died," said Mr. Mak.

The braided-haired girl figures in another ghost story, this one near the Lotus Pond at the Chung Chi College.

"Yes, it is the same ghost," said Miss

Amina Pang, a student in the Japanese Studies programme.

"Whenever there are people walking near the Lotus Pond at night, she will come up and ask for the time, but you should never answer back."

"The girl's heart was broken because her lover did not show up for their elopement, so she jumped into the pond and died."

"Therefore, if you answer her at anytime after midnight, she will take you with her and jump into the pond, because this is the time she should have met her lover," said Miss Pang.

Another much publicized story originated at Grace Tien Hall – a student hostel at The Chinese University's New Asia College.

"A boy who failed to win a girl's heart decided to kill himself," said Mr. Mak.

"He asked his roommate to teach him how to set up a timer that would allow electricity to pass through at a preset time,"

"He actually made the timer for himself. He wound some wires around his body and was killed by electric shock in his room."

"Since then, I learned that strange things always happen at the Grace Tien Hall," said Mr. Mak, "like dark shades always wandering in the room,"

The story was elaborated upon by another student:

"The boy had left a suicide note for his roommate that said, 'I will come back soon,'" said the student, who asked that his name not be used.

"At the time the boy was committing suicide, his roommate was having dinner at the canteen, and a chicken head on the table said to him 'I will come back soon.'"

However peculiar, mysterious and unbelievable campus ghost stories may seem, they nevertheless reveal something about student culture and values, suggested Dr. Joseph Bosco, an anthropology lecturer at The Chinese University.

"When I got a group of students together to tell ghost stories in my

class, they always argued where the story originated from."

"Then the students started to realize that ghost stories may not tell them anything about the ghosts, but rather, something about their culture and values," he said. Dr. Bosco now has collected over 50 different versions of ghost stories.

"What I am trying to do is to look at the variation of these stories and understand what the structures and real meanings of the stories are," he said.

At present he has only preliminary ideas. One notion he is exploring is that the psychological tension in students can be discerned from ghost stories.

"On one hand, students have to study hard, get a good grade and then get a good job. On the other hand, they might feel they have to socialize, meet friends – which may lead to a sense of conflict between these seemingly contradicting goals."


"So there is a favourite story about 'oxtail soup'. This is about a boy and a girl who decided not to meet each other during examination period,"

"In order to show her love, the girl cooked a bowl of soup every night and lowered it down for her boyfriend, who lived on the floor just below her in the same hostel. One evening, the boy received a bowl of soup as usual, but only later did he realize the girl was killed in an accident on that morning."

"I am not entirely sure, but I suspect that there is a sexual symbolism in the story," said Dr. Bosco.

The "oxtail soup" incident has many versions. They typify what Dr. Bosco called "the typical urban legend".

"The stories are 'true' to the student-tellers because they reflect something about student relationships and life in Chinese society. Hence they reflect some common subcultures."

"And it is in this sense that the stories are authentic and believable, but not in the literal sense of whether the events in the stories are physically possible or not," said Dr. Bosco. 



Although the primary focus was on covering all aspects of higher education, *Varsity* has always covered the local news. In the early days, one of the main reasons for this was to showcase our talent as a way of helping our students gain entry into the industry. This was also one of the reasons Professor Bryce McIntyre thought it was important for our students to cover [issues related to the local media](#).

# Covering China:

## *Reporters still face difficulties*

— COVER STORY  
Issue 39, January 1998  
Text Dawn Chan

**E**ven after the handover, Hong Kong journalists still face difficulties when reporting in mainland China.

It was reported in the November issue of the *Front Line* magazine, published by the Hong Kong Photojournalists Association, that two Hong Kong journalists were arrested in September when covering the 15th Party Congress in Beijing.

Sources said one of the journalists is Ha Tai-ning, an associate editor of *Ming Pao Daily*. The other reportedly is Li Bing-hua, deputy chief of the Beijing bureau of *Ta Kung Pao*. They were said to have been arrested for “leaking confidential and sensitive information.”

Mr. Ha reportedly was held for two days while Mr. Li had not yet been released when *Varsity* went to print. The report also said that some mainland Chinese journalists were arrested, too. However, the arrests are still unconfirmed. Neither *Ming Pao Daily* nor *Ta Kung Pao* will confirm the reports.

News of the arrests received scanty coverage in Hong Kong, leading to the suggestion that self-censorship is being exercised here.

Ms Emily Lau Wai-hing, a former journalist and a member of the Frontier, an alliance of pro-democracy politicians, subscribes to the self-censorship theory.

Said Lau, “It seems that it is the policy of the SAR government to depoliticise Hong Kong. The government only wants Hong Kong to make money, but not to talk about politics.

“Ironically, the local media follow the government’s will. Reports on the conditions of democracy and human rights in China and local politics are shunned.”

According to Ms Lau, the Frontier sent various newspapers a press release criticising the 15th Party Congress. However, none of them published it.

Ms Lau said that the media and the government have worked together to

**“Under the ‘one country-two systems’ principle, Hong Kong has its own set of laws. What is lawful here may be illegal in mainland China.”**

create “an illusion of peace”.

“The public believe in what the newspapers publish. The media are the main channels for the public to get accurate information,” she said. She thinks the function of mass media is thus destroyed.

Mr. Willy Lam Wo-lap, the China-desk associate editor of the *South China Morning Post* and a world-renowned Sinologist, said self-censorship has existed for 4 or 5 years.

“Journalists do receive political pressure. Some quit because of it,” he said. “It is increasingly difficult to hire political journalists.

“The SAR government’s attitude is to make light of politics. The whole atmosphere in this society affects the media,” said Mr. Lam. “Newspapers have now cut back on reporting on sensitive topics, while non-political events, such as human interest stories and economic issues, are focused on.”

Difficulties in gathering news in mainland China also contribute to the problem. According to Mr. Lam, these arise because of the conservativeness and caution of the Chinese government.

“The Beijing authorities do not like local journalists to ‘search’ for news. Press releases are the only thing that the mainland newspapers can report and publish,” he said.

Although the authorities now encourage coverage of big events such as the Party Congress, Mr. Lam said it is still very strict about politically sensitive topics.

He pointed out that journalists avoid stepping into the ‘restricted zone’ when reporting in China. “The No.1 rule of our journalists is to be law-abiding. We confirm the information with various sources. Experts’ opinions will also be

solicited,” he said.

Dr. Yu Xu of the Department of Journalism at Baptist University suggested that local journalists should learn Chinese law to avoid getting into trouble.

“Under the ‘one country-two systems’ principle, Hong Kong has its own set of laws. What is lawful here may be illegal in mainland China,” he explained.

Dr. Yu said self-censorship is caused not only by political pressure, but also by economic considerations.

“Newspaper owners are in the business of making money. Some of them are developing businesses in China. They may be afraid of losing business when reporting something that offends the Chinese authorities,” said Dr. Yu.


However, the chief editorial writer of *Apple Daily*, Mr. Fung Wai Kwong, said the self-censorship problem is not as serious as the public thinks it is.

“I believe that local newspapers are not the mouthpiece of the authorities,” he said.

He emphasised that local newspapers also publish news about demonstrations and criticism against the authorities, including the Chinese government.

“The most important thing for the local journalists is to insist on the code of practice,” he said. “I always bear in mind that journalists are responsible for reporting only the truth and protecting the public’s interests.”

Mr. Fung suggested that the Chinese government should review its attitudes toward the press.

“No one would like to see another local journalist being arrested for leaking the so-called sensitive information,” he said. 

This story covers two themes that were and to a certain extent still are, central to *Varsity's* coverage - education and sex. Covering tertiary education was one of the founding missions of the magazine and issues related to [sex and sexuality](#) are of great interest to young people.

# Peeping Toms:

## *Voyeurs spread fear in hostels*

— **EDUCATION**  
Issue 40, February 1998  
Text **Samantha Wong**

**M**ost reports of indecent incidents in university hostels are unconfirmed. Many are only hearsay. Nevertheless, there is some basis for concern, and the rumour mill has fed people's anxieties.

In early November, a female student at The Chinese University of Hong Kong reported she was spied upon by a male student while she was bathing. This is one of the few cases that became public. Many similar events are known only to hostel residents.

Miss Tammy Lam Man Ching, a Year 2 English student who lives in a hostel at Shaw College at The Chinese University, talked about some of the indecent incidents she has heard about.

"I have heard of cases at Shaw College," she said. "It is said that underclothes have been stolen when female residents washed their clothes."

Students at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) have heard similar stories.

Miss Sylvia So is a Year 3 student who lived in a HKUST hostel last year.

"I heard that a few years ago, a boy hid in a bathroom carrying a mirror to spy on a girl who was bathing," said Miss So. "The girl discovered it when she saw something flashing. The boy was then caught on the scene."

In order to prevent such incidents from happening, different hostels take different actions.

Shaw College at the Chinese University has met with the residents' association to seek ways to protect the privacy of female residents.

Assistant Student Affairs Officer of Shaw College Chor Koon-fai explained the initial plans to prevent Peeping Toms from operating in the dormitories.

"First," said Mr. Chor, "we may keep the doors of toilets locked, and residents will have to use keys to open the doors. But before we do this, the residents' association has to collect the opinions of the residents."

"Second, the hostel rules are being enforced more strictly. In the past, female and male students have been sometimes found playing mahjong together at night. Now the rules are stricter and warnings will be given on the first violation. If students do not cooperate, they will have to come to see me."

"Students are also encouraged to have discussions in common areas rather than in their rooms. More space will be planned for common areas and more chairs and tables will be provided," he said.

Mr. Chor added, "the hostel staff are also being instructed how to react



when they encounter these events. We will publicize these events to make students aware of these incidents."

However, the plans for improvement may not get overwhelming support from residents.

Miss Chow Pik Lam, chairperson of the resident's association of Hostel II of Shaw College, described the reaction to a Peeping Tom incident last year.

"About the same time last year," said Miss Chow, "a girl was spied on when she was bathing. The association then conducted a survey to ask female residents whether they would agree to keeping the doors of the toilets locked. The numbers of students who were for and against the idea were approximately the same."

"Students first found it inconvenient for themselves, as well as for visitors, to go to the toilets. Second, they worried that female residents would be locked inside the toilet by the voyeurs."

At present, the entrance of the hostel has a security code system and residents have to input a secret code when they come back late at night.

"The code is changed regularly, and residents are informed of the new code by email," said Miss Chow.

Miss Lam of Shaw College explained what the was practice in her hostel.

"After midnight, residents have to sign up when they come back to the hostel," said Miss Lam. "They have to write down their names, room numbers, the time they returned and the reasons they came back late."

The hostels at the University of Hong Kong have adopted another way to prevent strangers from entering.

Students have to input codes while entering the hostels, but also the attendants at the main hall will check the identities of visitors.

"If the attendants see strange faces," said Miss Michelle Li Ho Ming, a Year 1 law student at the University, "they will ask the strangers to show their hall cards to make sure they are hallmates."

"The hall cards are similar to student identity cards. The resident's

name, photo and room number are also included."

Miss Li also said, "in some halls, residents are required to sign in and leave their cards at the entrance when they bring visitors into the hall. When the visitors leave, the residents then sign out and get their cards back."

"Also, residents in other halls are only allowed to bring in one group of visitors at a time."

As a result, it is difficult for strangers to get into the halls.

"Moreover," Miss Li said, "if the friends of the residents want to lodge in the hall at night, the residents have to sign for them. Usually female residents sign for female visitors and male residents sign for male visitors."

In Miss Li's hostel, boys are not allowed to enter girl's floors from 10:30 p.m. to 8 a.m.. The residents themselves have developed their own ways to prevent members of the opposite sex from entering their floors at night.

"For example," said Miss Li, "when a boy enters a floor occupied by girls at night, the girls will be concerned and will ask the leader of the floor to punish the boy,

"As a result, even if a boy wants to find a girl, he stays in an open area such as a stairwell or lobby and asks other girls to forward a message."

As at the University of Hong Kong, the hostel residents at HKU have to input codes to get access to hostels.

However, the codes are not secret, residents say.

"Everyone knows the codes," said Miss May Ko, a Year 1 student of the University. "When students know the code of one hostel, they know the codes of all five hostels."

Students who know the residents can learn the codes, Miss Ko said.

There are security code systems installed at the doors of the toilets.

Female residents have to input codes when they go to the toilet.

But according to Miss Ko, the doors of the toilets are not shut very often.

"Female residents keep the doors open for convenience," said Miss Ko. "There is no fixed time when the door is locked."

Female residents have different feelings about reports of indecent incidents in hostels.

Miss Lam of The Chinese University is angry.

Said she, "there is no reason that female residents should be spied upon."

She also felt that more should be done to protect female residents.

"We can do little to protect ourselves," she said. "The college also does little to protect us. Punishments are not made public and so no caution is given."

"We do not want to see these events happen in the future," said Miss Chow. "We should find effective ways to protect female residents."

Miss Li of the University of Hong Kong said she would be frightened if she heard indecent incidents had happened in the hostel. The only thing she could do is to take precautions.

"When going to toilets," said Miss Li, "the only thing that can be done is to look around."

According to Miss Li, there is room for improvement in the toilets.

"Since people can look inside the toilets when the door is open, one more door could be built."

On the other hand, Miss Ko of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology feels quite safe in the hostel.

"At night, there are many people at the hostel and many are still dining. The rooms are also crowded together, therefore I do not worry about these incidents."

**"We can do little to protect ourselves."**

In July 2008, the Law Reform Commission released a consultation paper on proposals to set up the region's first sex offender register. The November 2009 issue of Periscope looked at the pros and cons of establishing such a register and also, after much effort, managed to talk to both the victims and former perpetrators of sex offences. In this article, convicted **former sex offenders** spoke candidly to *Varsity* about the **road to recovery**.

# Sex Offenders: *Steps to Recovery*

— **PERISCOPE**  
Issue 112, November 2009  
Text **Chow Ka-ying, Tiffany Ngai**

**A**h Ka used to have a dirty little secret. He used to touch up women riding on trains. It all began on a rainy day after Ah Ka got off work. His body brushed up against the hips of a young girl in the carriage. He was attracted to her and told himself she would not be hurt by his actions. So he touched her – it was his first sexual assault.

Eventually, he got caught by a detective who found him touching a woman's hip on the train. Ah Ka was sentenced to three months in jail.

After reading about a counselling and rehabilitation programme in a newspaper, Ah Ka decided to seek help.

He signed up at Caritas Community Support Project on Development of Sexual Health. The project was set up with government support in October last year to provide services for sex offenders who have been released from prison. It also offers support to sex offenders who have never been caught.

At Caritas' project, Ah Ka found people he could trust and who were willing to listen and care. Now, he no longer reoffends and lives a rich, diverse life. Sex is no longer everything.

According to Francis Kong Po-cheung, a qualified social worker and a sex therapist, most sexual offences are never reported, let alone prosecuted.

“ They [sex offenders] lose their sense of self worth. Therefore, it’s important for sex offenders to seek acceptance from others. ”





*Sex offenders assessed to be of moderate risk will be assigned to a group treatment in the Moderate Intensity Programme.*  
| Courtesy of CSD

Mr Kong is also the project supervisor of Caritas's project.

Mr Kong said the satisfaction offenders get from committing sexual offences lasts for just a moment. Afterwards, they feel dirty and despicable.

"They lose their sense of self worth. Therefore, it's important for sex offenders to seek acceptance from others," said Mr Kong. "It doesn't work to just blame them. We should treat them as people, not as criminals. Just because someone does something bad doesn't mean they are completely bad."

Mr Kong does not believe he can solve all his clients' problems, but he believes the project can help them to explore their characters and values, to reconnect with their hopes and passions in life.

By doing so, Mr Kong said his clients can find the courage to be responsible for their behaviour and to gain control over committing sexual offences.

Ah Sum, another client of Mr Kong, used to photograph women from beneath their skirts. It was not an easy decision for Ah Sum to seek help – he was afraid of how others would react.

"I was worried because I didn't know if I would be accused and judged. Every

time I thought about how my family, my work and my life could be affected by my actions, I felt pressure and anxiety," he said.

When Ah Sum first started his counselling, he was still tempted to re-offend. But whenever he felt the urge, he chose to think about the most important people in his life and the consequences of being discovered. "I couldn't disappoint those who had given me a second chance," he said.

With the help of the project and support from his wife and family, Ah Sum managed to overcome his habit.

Apart from Caritas, the government also provides rehabilitation therapies for sex offenders through the Social Welfare Department.

Yuen Shing-chi, a Senior Clinical Psychologist said the department's psychologists usually apply cognitive behaviour therapy to clients. This involves changing the way clients think about their behaviour.

Mr Yuen said some offenders may try to mitigate the seriousness of their offences and convince themselves that their actions do not cause any major harm to the victims.

"To prevent relapse, we give advice on how to restructure their living

pattern with a view to reducing their risk of reoffending. Possible ways for them to handle their stress or negative moods will be discussed too," he said.

As for those offenders who have been caught and convicted, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) has established the Sex Offender Evaluation and Treatment Unit. The unit aims to help sex offenders lead a law abiding and constructive life.

Offenders are first assessed for their risk of reoffending and treatment needs. They are then enrolled in either the Moderate Intensity Programme or the High Intensity Programme.

Both these programmes include mood management, rectification of distorted sexual attitude, handling deviant sexual interests and victim empathy training.

Most treatments use a behavioural modification approach, but in some cases, the CSD will use medication to curb inmates' sexual urges.

"We would only use drugs to lower the offenders' hormone levels when all other therapies seem to be ineffective. This ultimately reduces the sex drive of an individual," said Stanislaus Lai Ding-kee, Chairman of Hong Kong Sex Culture Society and a Criminology

“We don’t have as much supervision of released offenders due to the shortage of human resources. That’s why they [Hong Kong sex criminals] are more likely to reoffend.”

Social worker, Francis Kong Po-cheung shows a picture drawn by his client from a focus group. Through sketching trees, social workers can understand different parts of the victims’ lives.

Francesca Fong |



lecturer at the City University of Hong Kong.

An example of when medical treatment might be appropriate was in the case of XYY men, also called “Super Males”. Mr Lai explained XYY men have strong sex impulses because they have an extra Y chromosome.

However, it is hard to generalise about the main reason behind sex offences. Every sex criminal has a different personality, outlook and experience of growing up, which may influence their sex offending habit.

Mr Lai outlined a case where the client’s mother worked as a hostess. He was angry with his mother and hated women as a result, raping them to vent his rage. According to Mr Lai, this case was about sexual violence rather than sexual satisfaction.

Violent sex offenders derive excitement and pleasant sensations through violence. “They feel excited when seeing the victims shout and scream for help,” said Mr Lai.

Sexual excitement can also be aroused by smell, for example, some sex criminals steal underwear. It is not the process of stealing that excites them, but rather, the body warmth or smell left on the underwear that leads

to erotic fantasies.

Instead of trying to eliminate their sexual excitement towards the acts, Mr Lai tries to help them find more legitimate ways to achieve their goals.

“You could just give them used female underwear,” he said. “Once they have sexual excitement from smelling underwear, they should satisfy it in a legal way.”

“The main point is to determine whether they satisfy their sexual arousal through legal means or not,” said Mr Lai. “If they have permission (from their partner), or the action is under the social consensus, then it is legal.” In another case, a man pitched a tent on a hillside. He lured girls there and raped them. He even videotaped the process. “It is stupid, but he is addicted like a drug abuser.”

Mr Lai described such actions as compulsive reactive behaviour – perpetrators have uncontrollable sexual impulses, and their cognitive control ability is low.

This is an extreme example of sexual impulses that have gone out of control. But Mr Lai said most sexual impulses are normal; the important thing is how they are handled.

To help sex offenders break the cycle

of their offending behaviour, Mr Lai said some countries, like the United States, put offenders under intensive surveillance for two years. During the period, they are in constant contact with a range of professionals such as psychologists and social workers.

Robert J. McGrath is the Clinical Director of Vermont Treatment Program for Sexual Abusers in the United States. The programme provides assessment, treatment and supervision in the community.

Mr McGrath said the experience in the United States had shown that, “a key to effective community management is treatment providers, probation officers, victim advocates and police work(ing) together to closely supervise and help the offender live an offence-free life.”

Mr Lai at the City University said Hong Kong follows a similar model for treating and supervising sex offenders, but there is one big difference.

“We don’t have as much supervision of released offenders due to the shortage of human resources. That’s why they (Hong Kong sex criminals) are more likely to reoffend.”

The People section has become one of the highlights of *Varsity*. Over the years, our reporters have profiled the famous, the not-so-famous and the little known. No matter who the subject of the profile is, they are someone with a meaningful story to tell. Our personality profiles are also published, in their entirety, by The Standard newspaper. This article, from November 2010, profiles [Hong Kong's leading architect, Rocco Yim Sen-kee](#) who rarely gives such in-depth interviews that touch upon the personal as well as the professional.





# The Understated Master

## *Rocco Yim*

— **PEOPLE**  
Issue 117, November 2010  
Text **Rebecca Wong**

He is arguably the biggest name in Hong Kong architecture, the only local architect to be invited to submit a masterplan for the West Kowloon Cultural District alongside international stars Sir Norman Foster and Rem Koolhaas.

He may not be instantly recognizable to most Hong Kong people, but many will have seen his work: the Hong Kong MTR station, Citibank Plaza, Lok Fu Centre II just to name a few.

Yet in person, the softly-spoken Rocco Yim Sen-kee cuts a gentle and

modest figure. With his traditional oval glasses, neat white shirt and long brown jacket, Yim has the demeanour of a scholar. He smiles frequently and often gives an embarrassed laugh when asked questions about himself.

But when the conversation turns to the topics he feels strongly about, his voice gains in volume and you can see his passion. And for Yim, architecture, its relationship to a city and its potential for social good, is a passion. He firmly believes that form follows function and he draws the inspiration for his designs from the surroundings

of his sites.

As a boy, he stood out from his classmates because of his love for the visual arts. He was always drawing or designing catalogues and Christmas cards. But the people around him scared him by saying a painter could never survive. It was just as well.

"I know I am not a 'pure' artist because I cannot create something out of nothing," he says.

"The good thing about architecture is that it asks for solutions to some practical problems." These problems provide the challenges Yim likes to

tackle. For instance, the flow of foot traffic at a shopping centre. In his eyes, architecture is the art and science of environmental improvement.

This can be seen in the Hollywood Terrace project Yim designed for the Housing Society. Within the framework of a residential development, he devised a series of public landscaped gardens, punctuated by lifts and stairs to form a pedestrian access connecting the Mid-Levels and Sheung Wan. As a result, the flow of people between the two areas was greatly improved without transportation. The project won the Hong Kong Institute of Architects

highly professional architects in Asia.

With his firm, Rocco Design Limited, Yim has won numerous local and international competitions. The new government headquarters at the old Tamar site will showcase his ideas about how architecture can contribute to a city.

But Yim tries not to let the accolades go to his head, "I shouldn't use these awards to affirm myself. In the past, many artists were only given recognition after death," he says, "But I can't help but feel more confident, when I get recognition."

Despite the recognition, Yim insists that his career has not always been smooth. Although his design won first prize in the Opera de la Bastille competition, it was not chosen as the ultimate design.

"From then, right until 2000, we did not even have a chance to produce real cultural architecture. It was almost a 20-year [wait].

Yet cultural architecture, without commercial constraints, is what Yim likes best. One of his favourite works is the Bamboo Pavilion, a temporary piece he produced for Hong Kong in the Berlin Festival in 2000.

Even when he is not working on cultural and public architecture, Yim tries to apply the same principles to his private practice. That is, to produce architecture that is connected to the city and improves urban spaces.

Working in Hong Kong, Yim says

local architects face very different circumstances to their overseas counterparts. The business model here restricts the number of cultural projects and the freedom of architects in Hong Kong.

He says fresh ideas are often strangled by conservative clients who dare not accept new ideas, and dictatorial developers, who arbitrarily assert their own tastes.

When faced with the dilemma of making money or acting according to conscience, Yim insists on not taking on projects which are destructive to society. Works that do not make any contribution besides earning money for clients are also avoided.

He recalls once quitting in the middle of a project because of a disagreement with the client. "We discovered that there were great discrepancies between our thoughts on the environment," says Yim. "The resultant work would seriously waste energy and electricity. So we said no to that."

"You have got to have the determination. Basically you have to insist on your principles, though it is always easier saying it than doing it... For me, I will try to stick to them," Yim says.

Yim found a way out in 2004, leaving Hong Kong for the mainland. That year, he won the international invited competition for the Museum of Guangdong. "We can draw on the

**"The resultant work would seriously waste energy and electricity. So we said no to that. ,,"**

Certificate of Merit in 2001.

It is just one of the many awards Yim has won in his 35 year career. Yim set up his own practice just two years after graduating from the University of Hong Kong and first attracted international attention when he won the 1st Prize Award of the Opera de la Bastille International Competition in 1983. Later he was twice awarded the Gold Medal by ARCASIA, a group of



**“What I said about the Chinese elements are actually a standard. They represent an appreciation and understanding of the space.”**

strength of the mainland,” he says, “but development there has not yet reached a mature stage.”

As for his own architectural tastes, Yim says he is informed by a Chinese aesthetic. “My works are seldom glitzy or overdone,” says Yim, “the traditional Chinese arts have never encouraged exaggeration.” He adds, “The best painting is not the one which surprises people but inspires people.”

“An abstract conception of art is important in Chinese art, this abstract conception is something that can be sensed in Eastern art. If this sense can be incorporated into architecture, then you can produce something of lasting value.”

Inspired by the famed Chinese handscroll painting “Qing Ming Festival on the River”, Yim designed a master plan for the West Kowloon Cultural District. According to his company’s website, what strikes him in the picture “is not any ‘iconic’ architecture, but an energy that radiates from the people’s activities.”

“We are not just transplanting elements of the Chinese culture into the project. What I said about the Chinese

elements are actually a standard. They represent an appreciation and understanding of the space,” explains Yim about his design.

Asked how he feels about being the only local and only Chinese to make it to the final round of the West Kowloon project, Yim says he is glad he is there. He believes he has a better understanding of the urban space and the needs of local people.

Facing formidable rivals in Foster and Koolhaas, Yim is not intimidated. He knows his design’s advantage – it is plain but practical.

“Pressure is definitely there, and longing as well. But this is not the first time I have ever undergone such circumstances. I am already getting used to and am familiar with this environment.”

In architecture, as in life, Yim takes sincerity to be the highest virtue. “We have to be sincere,” he says, “and so does architecture.”

When asked if he himself is sincere, Yim smiles.

“Hopefully.”

Asked to comment on his success, Yim laughs again. “The awards given

to me were mainly local ones, and they are given out not so seriously...I still have a long way to go before I can reach an international standard.”

Flicking the corners of some books on the table, he adds, “I shouldn’t be the one to comment on that. It’s for others to say.”

Looking to the future, Yim hopes to show the public what good architecture is and how good architecture can improve society and improve their lives. He wants to do this through his work, particularly through public architecture.

“If they can see [those benefits] then the voices demanding better architecture will be stronger. I wish my own projects can become concrete examples.”

As for how he himself is perceived, Yim just wants people to remember he is a sincere person. “Normally architects are not sincere as they have to sell ideas. I hope I will not have to be like them.”

As the push to promote local consciousness gathers pace in Hong Kong, there has been plenty of debate and discussion about groups such as the Hong Kong Autonomy Movement and the waving of flags bearing insignia from British colonial Hong Kong. There has even been talk of Hong Kong independence. But back in October 2011, when *Varsity* reporters and editors were working on this story, there was relatively little coverage of the phenomenon in the mainstream media. This prescient piece from December 2011, looks at the **young people who are nostalgic for a past** they did not experience or cannot remember.



# Remembering or Re-imagining British Hong Kong?

— OUR COMMUNITY  
Issue 121, November 2011  
Text Carmen Shiu, Glenn Lee



**H**is ringtone is “God Save the Queen”, the wallpaper on his mobile phone is the flag of colonial Hong Kong and he has deliberately cultivated an English accent. There is no doubt that Kay Ng Hong-ning is an Anglophile.

He is also a 19-year-old first-year student at HKU SPACE who was just five years old when Hong Kong was handed over to the People’s Republic of China in 1997 – too young to remember much about the colonial days.

While Ng may seem a bit extreme, he is not the only Hong Konger to feel nostalgic about the colonial days. The flag of the colony is now spotted in almost every street protest in the territory. Just search for “British Hong Kong” on the internet and you will find Facebook groups such as “I am a British Hongkonger” which has almost 100,000 followers.

It is perhaps easier to understand why certain middle-aged Hongkongers would reminisce about the old days but what about those who were infants when Hong Kong was still under British rule?

Ng feels he was brought up in a

“British cultural environment”, citing examples of the British legacy like British-style street names and the city’s common law system.

He said this backdrop inspired him to find out more about colonial Hong Kong and his research later developed into an intense interest in the city’s former colonial master. He has read all kinds of books about Britain; books on its history, its culture and its political system, plus travel guidebooks and even cook books.

But this obsession did not come from his parents who were never associated with the colonial establishment or instilled such fascination for Britain in him.

He does, however, recall that when he was a child, his grandmother once told him about the celebrations for Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation in 1953. She said there were festive decorations everywhere in Hong Kong. She also told him many considered it an honour to have a glimpse of the queen during her visit to the territory in 1975.

While studying to become a legal executive at HKU SPACE, Ng learnt about the Hong Kong legal system and

how it was modelled on the British one. Even the city’s constitution, the Basic Law, is drafted with the principle of common law in mind and is fundamentally different from the mainland’s legal system.

So strong is Ng’s identification with Britain that he would rather put in Hong Kong or GBR (the ISO country code for the United Kingdom of Great Britain) when he is asked to state his nationality in application forms.

Ng does not deny that he is clearly in the minority among his age group. He considers himself lucky that his friends do not see him as a freak because of his relatively unusual interest.

He insists that being nostalgic about the colonial days does not mean that he is living in the past. While acknowledging colonialism is aggressive by nature and had caused harm to the territory, Ng says: “The local Hong Kong culture was born [during the colonial period] which is neither from China nor Britain. That’s why I don’t want people to forget what the British have done to Hong Kong, both the good and the bad.”

Perhaps reminiscing about the city’s

Hong Kong. His conclusion is that there was much better communication between the top officials and the public, and people were more satisfied with the government than they are now.

"I think it would be wrong to say I

But they have few sources, except the official version, to refer to during their exploration.

This could explain why some of them tend to imagine an ideal past and glorify colonial rule on the basis of one or two facts or tales told by the past generation.

While some young people like Ng and Chik may feel nostalgia about a period they barely experienced, others who have lived most of their lives under colonial rule can confuse the reality of the period with an idealised memory of the "good old days".

"I got a pay rise every year when Wilson and Patten were governors of Hong Kong," says Mr Chan Wan-leung, who worked as a company chauffeur in the 1990s and is now in his fifties.

He attributes his annual pay rises to the administration of the two governors and points out he never got increases after 1997, conveniently forgetting the intervening Asian financial crisis.

Terence Chang Cheuk-cheung, headmaster of the elite Diocesan Boys' School, recalls a time when life was more carefree. He says that when he was a DBS student, he had no pressure from examinations and cared less about marks. Unlike students nowadays, he did not need to go to tutorial classes after school.

Chang says there was also greater social mobility before the handover. In the past, a Form Five graduate could be a police inspector while a Form Four graduate could qualify as a civil servant. Today, a degree holder can only be a police officer.

However, Chang does not believe these differences can be attributed to the change in sovereignty.

For Yeung Sum, a veteran former legislator and former leader of the Democratic Party and an associate professor of social work at Hong Kong University, credit should be given where it is due.

Yeung cites a professional civil service, a well-established legal system and world-class social infrastructure as the best contributions the colonial

“There is no hope in the future if we forget our past.”

colonial past is just a pretext for these young people to reinforce their identity as Hongkongers.

Quite a number of Hong Kongers feel uneasy about the fact that Hong Kong became part of China in 1997 because of the huge differences across the border.

Another 19-year-old, Ivan Chik Yu-hin, says: "I can't help but feel that we are not in the same boat, and hence we need to have a separate identity."

Chik, who is currently studying law at the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom, says he was too young to remember what the colonial days were like but he concludes that: "British Hong Kong was definitely better than today's Hong Kong."

He justifies his position with his own analysis and interpretation of information he has obtained from the media and statistics and surveys about the differences between pre- and post-1997

prefer British Hong Kong, because after all it was colonial rule. But I don't prefer today's Hong Kong either. . I put my hope in the future Hong Kong when what's been promised in the Basic Law turns to reality," he says.

Lau Siu-lun, a sociologist at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, puts down this phenomenon of young people reminiscing about a period of which they have little first-hand experience to the lack of serious research and debate about Hong Kong's experiences in that era.

"Today's society lacks the ability to see things in a macroscopic way," says Lau. "It is normal for people to reminisce about the past, when the reality now isn't so great."

Lau believes it is hard for Hong Kong to move forward without thoroughly reflecting on and analysing its past. "It's like keeping a relationship; if you break up with a partner without reflecting on what went wrong, you will keep on breaking up," he says.

Those who were children during the last days of Hong Kong's colonial administration are now adults. Some of them want to further explore their identity and the city's colonial past.



*Kay Ng Hong-ning with his collection - a flag of colonial Hong Kong*  
| Courtesy of Kay Ng Hong-ning



*Lau Siu-lun thinks Hong Kongers should reflect on past experience when reminiscing about colonial Hong Kong*  
| Carmen Shih

administration made to Hong Kong. "Foreign companies set up their factories in China and their headquarters in Hong Kong because of our mature legal system," says Yeung.

However, he also points to the downside of British rule. "Hong Kong citizens had no say at all," Yeung says. He explains that before 1991, all legislators were appointed by the governor and the government implemented policies with little or no public consultation.

The cultural critic, author and academic Chin Wan-kan (also known as Chin Wan) says Britain strategically imposed a sense of "dependency" on Hong Kong before 1997, which harmed people's sense of autonomy.

"Hong Kong people are not used to solving problems on their own," says Chin. "That is because most of the standards in various professions, like accountancy and law, were well established by the British before the handover. People who want to be an accountant or a lawyer must sit for examinations officially recognised by Britain."

Chin adds that British experts would

be called in to help solve problems whenever Hong Kong encountered any hardships. Its previous over-dependence on Britain has made it hard for Hong Kong to make any advances on its own.

The use of English is another thing that the colonial government imposed on Hong Kongers.

Chin recalls how a classmate regularly misbehaved and only worked hard at English. The classmate told Chin that he could find a good job working in a foreign company or as a sailor, as long as his English was good enough. The syllabuses at that time only focused on the practical approach to English such as grammar and formal letter writing in order to drill students to be civil servants.

The colonial education system was mainly geared to producing functionaries rather than fine minds. Chin says schools seldom emphasised the cultural importance of western culture, such as Greek philosophy and English literature. "The culture of Hong Kong people is shallow," he says.


It seems the British government did not prepare Hong Kong for long-term

development, even in terms of its economy.

According to Chin, the only pillar of Hong Kong's economy is financial services and people are obsessed with the stock market. However, the colonial government ignored the fact that primary and secondary industries are crucial to people's livelihoods.

The government remained indifferent when more and more factories moved to the mainland and agriculture and the fishing industry were allowed to decline.

Some may idealise the colonial past and point to it as a golden age in contrast to an unsatisfactory present. Others may want to hold on to cherished memories of what seemed to be simpler times. Whatever the case, the colonial past is part of Hong Kong's history.

"There is no hope in the future if we forget our past," says Yeung Sum. 



VAR-SITY // THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES



# Thanks for the Memories





**Esther Lam**  
Varsity 1993 - 1994

When I received an email from Emily (Owen) calling for a snippet about the good old days, I realized TWO DECADES have gone by since *Varsity* taught me a key lesson in life far more useful than what I learned from the course work itself. Whatever you do, especially when you are attempting something new, there are always people out there telling you that you can't do it. That was what the editorial team of *Varsity* in 1993 heard from time to time, when we were trying to publish the 40-page magazine as a monthly publication.

And we made it! In the face of a worthwhile challenge, if we give it our best we always come out of it stronger. What do we have to lose?

**Clarence Tsui**  
Varsity 1993 - 1995

*Varsity* was first published in 1993.

Being the Editor in Chief of the two year-old publication, I was pretty glad we had no template or any direction to follow. Together with my Managing Editors, we came up with the idea to turn the individual, standalone articles into a series - which later became a prototype for *Periscope*. At that time, we started off with producing a series of articles on Vietnamese refugees. We tried to look into the issue from different angles. We interviewed the refugees and also a government official. It was a great breakthrough, as the stories became a more coherent package.

Working on *Varsity* is not simply about getting an article written, we have to ask ourselves why we are writing such an article. Whether it is for the print edition or in multimedia online format, I believe all *Varsity* students share the same goal. We hope that readers or viewers could have a better understanding

of a certain issue. For example, I worked on a story about sex workers. By making their voices heard, I hoped to lessen the effect of labelling and stereotyping of sex workers by the mainstream media.

I worked as a reporter for several newspapers upon graduation and later I became Asia Bureau Chief for the *Hollywood Reporter*. I also pursued further education and worked as a teacher. Over the years of working in the industry, I have noticed a significant change in the way news is reported. In this time and era, we embrace the 24-hour news cycle. There is no doubt reporters have to be efficient and quick in keeping their website updated. Also, people expect analysis from reporters. Readers are no longer satisfied with what, when, who, where and how. They also would like to know 'why'. In order to be good reporters, we had better have a holistic understanding of the social context and be ready to answer 'why'.

*As told to Liz Yuen*



**Mei Chi So**  
**Varsity 1993 - 1995**

"I'm a rock & roll printer. I jam, but not print."  
My classmate Clarence (Tsui) may not believe that I still remember the notice he put on the printer at the computer lab where we worked on *Varsity* 20 years ago.  
We worked hard, we were sometimes pissed off, but we laughed. And I still smile thinking about it. Those were the days.  
I always feel that I'm blessed to be a journalist. I have been entrusted with the privilege to ask anyone for an interview (though of course, that "anyone" can always turn me down) and let their wisdom enrich me. Working for *Varsity* was definitely the beginning of my blessing.  
My deepest gratitude goes to my dear teachers at JLM, especially Bryce who was the founder of the magazine!

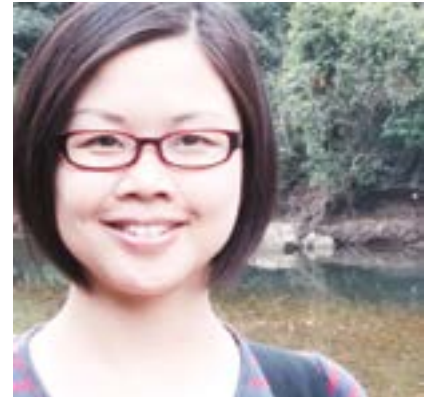
**Rochelle Chan**  
**Varsity 1993 - 1994**

I was lucky to join the CUHK journalism programme before the 1997 handover.  
It was a common dream among our classmates to witness what would happen during this historical event. To me, therefore, it was not a natural move to choose the English reporting or editing courses to prepare for my future career, as the English-language media in Hong Kong were in the minority.  
However, the modern outlook of *Varsity* attracted me. Bryce and our seniors had laid down a good foundation for us to explore the field of reporting and editing.  
In those days, we could do our own layout through computer software, which was quite advanced for that time. What is more, our department's prestige meant we could intern at newsrooms and follow-up on the hot news stories of the day, such as when six senior ATV news journalists resigned over management's attempts to intervene in the broadcast of footage about the 1989 June 4 crackdown (亞視六君子事件).  
Thank you for giving us the opportunity to be one of the participants of *Varsity*.



**Helen Chan**  
**Varsity 1995 - 1996**

It has been years since I last wrote an article in English, yet this is what I needed to do every month when I chose to work for *Varsity*.  
Writing in English was never easy, but I still treasure this rare opportunity to practise writing in English by being a reporter and editor of *Varsity*.  
Being in a small group (of only about 20 students), we were close to each other and were free to choose story topics after discussing with editors. *Varsity* was very young at that time, not quite known to the public, so it was not easy for us to arrange interviews with famous people.  
I was lucky to be able to interview with the current People Power legislator Raymond Wong Yuk-man, when he launched "*Mad Dog Daily*" in March 1996. I can still remember how he talked to me in his louder-than-usual voice, together with lots of body movements, just as he does in the chamber of the Legislative Council nowadays.  
People don't really change, got it?



**Ada Wong**  
**Varsity 1998 - 2000**

Time flies. I still remember my very first assignment for *Varsity* - interviewing students at different campuses for the Answerman section. We were asked to finish the task shortly after joining the production team. It was a good chance to build up courage and refine our presentation skills, which are essential for a journalist.  
As a *Varsity* reporter, I enjoyed very much talking with Anthony Lawrence and Keith R. Richburg for the story on foreign correspondents in Hong Kong (Career, April 1999). I once dreamt of being a correspondent after the interview, though this dream did not come true.  
It was also a memorable experience to work with my Eliza Wong for the Photo Feature. The piece 'Specialty Shops - Aura of Tradition' (January 2000) is the most satisfactory work for me during my days in *Varsity*.  
I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Bryce McIntyre for leading us to professionalism. I wish *Varsity* every success in future.

## Crystal Yip

### Varsity 2001 - 2003

It has been over ten years since I worked on *Varsity*. I was a reporter for *Varsity* in 2001-02 and I was the Editor-in-Chief in the first semester in 2002-03. Working in *Varsity* is like being in a big family. Looking back, I was so green and silly when I was still a freshman reporter.

It was so great that we had Bryce as our professor. He was just like a father, at least to me. He guided us on how to write, how to present the story in various styles. We may think that using very difficult words in our writing would show how good our English is. But I still clearly remember Bryce taught us not to do that in *Varsity*, because it was pointless to dig the dead bodies (those difficult words) from the graveyard, that nobody would use.

It was also very nice to have Mark Wong, the Business Manager, to offer us assistance and to give us some tips on how to

handle Bryce, haha! To a certain extent, though Mark is a man, he was like our mother on *Varsity*. He was often so kind and patient in helping us in our publication. Without him, there would not be any advertisements in *Varsity*.

Being a reporter in Year 1, it was always exciting to choose the beat for every issue. Since most of us loved interviewing famous people, the "People" beat was always a popular one.

However, we could not have so many people working for one beat while nobody chose the harder one (i.e. Periscope). So it was nerve-racking to see who could be the first or earlier ones to choose the beats (if I remember correctly, we drew lots to see who could choose first).

Sometimes, classmates were very nice and would swap their beat with you so that you could do something you liked. I was able to do the

People beat one time and my budget idea was to interview the female Long Hair (Ms Lui Yuk Lin). I used a lot of time to find her contact and it was like winning the Mark Six when I eventually got her contact number. Unfortunately, she was busy protesting at the checkpoint to Macau when I called her and she was unable to give me an interview.

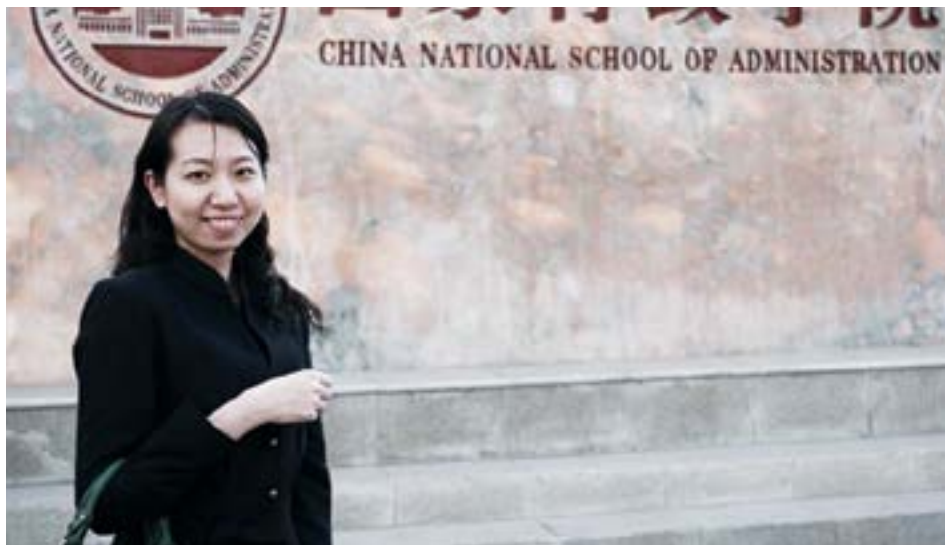
As for Year 2, I was so glad to be elected as the Editor-in-Chief for the first semester. It was a marvelous experience to take charge of the whole production of *Varsity*, including deciding the theme for each issue, doing the cover design, choosing photos, editing, doing layout, etc. I remember one time I had a bad cold but still had to finish the editing throughout the night. The computer lab became our home and we spent so much time there.

I must also mention the "Answerman" section. It was interesting to partner

with another classmate to interview university students on various topical issues at all eight universities in Hong Kong.

At that time, digital cameras were not yet popular and we were using film to take photos. Since we might not be really good at using the cameras, we might be able to get excellent answers to the questions, but not good photos. That meant our interview would not get published. It was really daunting when this happened because sometimes the answers from other university students were unique and special, and could definitely add spice to *Varsity*.

When I was the Editor-in-Chief in Year 2, all our film for Answerman in one issue was destroyed by the processing company and all reporters had to do the whole thing again. Well, those were the good days and it seems that I cannot stop talking about *Varsity* once I get started.





**Antony Tam**  
**Varsity 2003 - 2004**

*I remember the time I kept changing my budget ideas based on editors' comments... I remember the time I tried to call interviewees but no one replied... I remember the time I stayed up late in the computer lab to do desktop publishing of Varsity... My hard work paid off when I read my contributions in Varsity. My first article written for Varsity was about the budget cuts in universities in Hong Kong. As I am passionate about education policies, Varsity enabled me to understand more about education issues through interviews and copywriting. This later helped me to devote myself to an education career with my journalistic knowledge. I would like to thank Bryce McIntyre and Robert Stone for their advice and teaching!*



**Xam Chan**  
**Varsity 2004 - 2006**

*Move that "N" two points closer to the "e". I am not sure if my attention to details got me elected as the Chief Editor among my colleagues or vice versa. Anyway I took up the role for Varsity Issue 93 to 95. It was the time when we worked on three issues of Varsity per semester, when we shifted from film to digital photographs, when we were still using PageMaker—the silliest software I had ever used because it did not allow "undo" for some functions! We wanted our layouts to be as interesting as our stories, so we spent a few weeks designing the folios before the semester started. We looked for reference and styles, stuff that we self-learned. Thanks to Siuhak for allowing us to use his drawing as our magazine's cover, the 93rd issue was a really cute one. The 94th issue, on the contrary, was a bit scary as it featured a snake coming out from the magazine. The 95th presented readers a puzzle—who does the hand belong to? With the multimedia-savvy generation, Varsity will definitely "look" even better!*



**Howard Kwong**  
**Varsity 2006 - 2007**

*Being the Editor of Varsity basically took up all of my time, especially during the 100th issue, but it was time well spent. We planned early for it, while still working on the 98th issue. We wanted to interview someone prominent, and who's better than Sir Run Run Shaw, turning 100 in 2007, whose name is on many buildings in Hong Kong including our Shaw College? But no matter how we tried, we could not get in touch with him. So we had to come up with an alternative. At that time, then TVB General Manager of Broadcasting, Stephen Chan Chi-wan's *Be My Guest* programme was very popular, and he agreed to appear in our People section to share his passion for work and life after we contacted him through a lecturer at CUHK.*

*We also wanted a story that would really interest university students. Being an Administrative Officer (AO) was a dream job for many students, so we did a Periscope on that. I love Varsity for the high autonomy it offers, that we could do the stories we wanted to and interview people that interested us. Our instructor at the time, Agnes Cheung, continually challenged us to think critically about the stories and our choice of words. It was this mode of thinking which I started to grasp when working on Varsity that I think is the most valuable skill that I have now. The black cover with gold words "Varsity 100th Issue" sealed the best days in my university life.*

*As told to Melanie Leung*





**Jessica Fan**  
Varsity 2006 - 2007

With a small team of editors, teamwork was the key to bringing our two issues of *Varsity* into print. A team of eight editors, we were lucky to have Kim Hyun-hee from South Korea, Astrid Chang and Sophia Zhang from China. Cultural diversity enriched our ideas and added colours to our teamwork. (We wrote about cocktails, table manners and some other more foreign topics in the magazine, and it was fun!) We also had local editors including Alan Liu, Kit Lou, Evelina Leung and Amy Nip, who gave the group a vivid atmosphere.

*Varsity* gave us a place to learn, to err, to be trained and get ready for challenges ahead. Teammates are now in different fields of the media industry, but we all started from *Varsity*.

I would like to express my gratitude to our tutor, Miss Agnes Cheung, who gave us insightful opinions, also guided us to be professionals in the media industry. It was my honour to have worked with you, Thank you.

**Tanna Chong**  
Varsity 2007 - 2009

Sometimes when I was left with minutes before deadlines in the newsroom, I missed my time in *Varsity*, where the team had the luxury of spending days and nights to perfect a single story.

I still remember how I spent four hours travelling to and from a remote island for the first interview of my life, did three hours of talking, spent another five hours to do the transcripts, and another six hours boiling it down to 1,000 words.

Another time, I spent the whole afternoon in Central, walking from one end to another, to interview six cupcake shops. It ended up that I did not include all the cases in the story, and just a few lines for some of them. And I would not forget the "camping" nights in the school's computer labs to edit and design layouts for the stories.

These experiences always remind me of the high level of dedication required for quality journalism.

**Chan Lok Ming**  
Varsity 2007 - 2009

I'm the Managing Editor of *Varsity* in Fall 2009.

I'm so happy to see *Varsity* celebrating its 20th anniversary. I can see from the School's press release that you guys have some new computers and conference rooms in the NAH building. What great progress! I hope you can use them to your advantage and keep *Varsity's* momentum going.

I'm now a reporter covering the LegCo beat for a local newspaper. Since the Chief Executive Election, we have been so busy and we don't really have time to "stay thinking"! Believe it or not, I really miss the good old days, when we had more time

to explore possibilities to expand our stories.

I believe a journalist can always learn much more if he or she has more time to step back and look at the issue. However, with inadequate human resources, it's difficult for a media company to let young journalists do so. Indeed I have been reading good stories on your website. I hope you can make use of your time, your freedom, so that you can prepare yourself well upon graduation.

Your teacher told me that many of you are choosing radio or television stations as your first priority for internship. But as a member of the industry, I do think you could have much more fun. Recently an evolutionary medium, House News, was launched. Even the printed media have been trying more in infographics. As a JLM student, I hope you can help the industry to explore more ways to present the stories we write.

Do enjoy your time, but don't order too much take-away!



**Nicole Pun**  
**Varsity 2009 - 2010**

After graduating from the School of Journalism and Communication last year, I am now pursuing my master of fine art degree in photography and media at the California Institute of the Arts (Calarts). It seems a very different path, but actually it is not.

Photography allows me to understand how my eye sees the world i.e. what kind of perspectives I am adopting to see things. Studying Journalism gave me a chance to sharpen my skills in how to take a decent picture, a picture with enough light, an interesting composition, more importantly, direct and clear communicative qualities. During the two years of working for *Varsity*, I photographed a lot of people, mostly interview headshots. That is very boring I have to say! Yet the key is how to make the interviewees character pop out from this

mundane setting.

In Issue 116 (May 2010), I photographed Lam Suet, who is a well-known local actor in action movies. Even though my friend and I had interviewed him in his office, we wanted the photographs to say more about him than just putting him up against a blank wall. So we met him again in a cha chaan teng. Lam Suet has a vivid, childish personality that people do not usually see in a movie star. While he was sipping his milk tea from a straw, he suddenly eyes winked at the camera, revealing his witty side. Luckily, I managed to capture it and it became the spread page photograph.

Little by little, *Varsity*, as a practice-based student magazine, not only offered me lots of chances to write different stories, it also trained my eyes to view things with a unique perspective.



**Elizabeth Cheung**  
**Varsity 2009 - 2010**

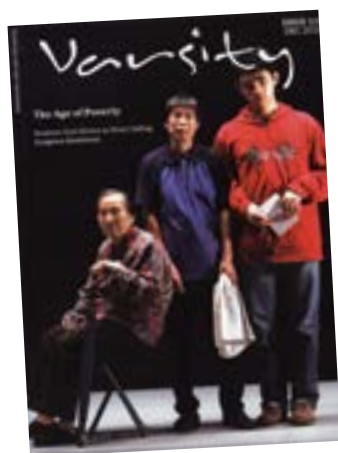
Editing is far from fun and the darkest mood descends upon you time after time: you are almost done with the layout of the article, and suddenly the computer refuses to respond before you can press the save button. You say a little 'f' or 's' word, complain to your fellow editors, then diligently resume your work. I remember I did get mad with the work of *Varsity* a couple of times when I failed to come up with interesting story ideas or cases I contacted refused my interview requests. However the fulfillment came to its fullest when the issue was out and copies were laid outside the magazine rack of New Asia Canteen.

Each issue I worked on is a part of my proud memories of the School of Journalism and Communication. Some think of *Varsity* as a casual student publication, but to me it was a valuable time to build up my journalistic experience and network of contacts.

Now I am a TV reporter, when I look at my business card folders that began from my time in *Varsity*, I could tell you how influential the three semesters with the magazine were.



### Christine Fung Varsity 2009 - 2010



The cleaner of my building (who has been working every day in my estate since I was in kindergarten), my own grandmother and my general education course teammate (who was always claiming that he was very poor in my Social Work class) were my models for the cover of *Varsity* Issue 118 (see left). A super last-minute shoot, but one of the best and simply most genuine photoshoots I have ever done in my life. We took two weeks to come up with a “cover”, but really one day to finalize what to do, half a day to scout the models, two hours to plan the shoot, one hour to execute it. When I first volunteered myself as the Art Director of the board, I was hoping I could be on the team while just dancing my fingers across the keyboard to move photos around, adjusting exposure and contrasts. I fantasised I would do this while watching other editors killing themselves copy-editing. Don't have to deal with words, sounds cool, looks fun (which is still true to a certain extent). Little did I know that when it comes to designing the

cover of *Varsity* issues, it has always been a pain in the ass. Poverty was a hot topic when we set our hands on Issue 118. Our managing editor Herman (Wong) was first to question “what's wrong with the city” before the term “the city is dying” eventually emerged.

A magazine cover is always the first thing to attract a reader's attention. Any photos, illustrations or graphics used have to echo the theme of the month. They should not be overpowering, nor should they be utterly irrelevant. Think Age of Poverty, think coins, empty pockets, empty hand, broken piggy bank, beggar. All too cliché. You constantly wanted to seek new heights when it's your turn to run the magazine.

Time was pressing, when was it ever not? We procrastinated till the last minute when Michelle (Mui) was clearly not too happy about our delay in uploading the first draft. So my chief editor, Karen Kwok, and I finally settled on an idea of shooting a simple cover of three generations of “poor people” like a simple Colours of Benetton ad.

Okay, so we had exactly two days to scout models, book the school studio, edit and upload the magazine before Michelle gave us that look again. On my way home that day, devastated, I saw the cleaner who works in my building (STILL working today as I write this) and initiated small talk with her while I was waiting for the lift. Then I realized she was off the next day! I invited (more like begged) her to be my model. She agreed. Having this nailed, I searched for an elderly person and a young adult. I had no choice but to bring my own granny and dragged one of my classmates into this because the cleaner was only getting one day off in the coming two weeks.

Sounds sketchy I know. But now when I look back, this is what *Varsity* is all about - college, trial and error, meeting deadlines, being creative and turning the impossible into the possible. Most importantly, I guess this is the path we have to walk before we can all call ourselves journalism students.



**Samuel Chan**  
Varsity 2010 - 2011

What I enjoyed most working at *Varsity* was that we were given the freedom to explore whatever topic that we found interesting, provided we could convince our editors and instructor our idea would work. There was no pre-set agenda for the story and I was given a free hand to develop the story in my own way.

Such freedom is a rare luxury to me now as a junior reporter working in a large media organisation.

One of the most unforgettable periods of my university life was the autumn semester I worked as *Varsity's* Editor-in-Chief, which was a huge contrast to the laid-back life I led as an exchange student in the first half of the year. Back then, what I tried to achieve for the magazine was probably similar to what many of my predecessors had in mind.

Apart from making changes that we saw fit to *Varsity*, I felt we should make a better use of the freedom we enjoyed at *Varsity* as a student publication not under any pressure to turn a profit or to be a mouthpiece for a certain interest group.

Of course, this was no easy task and was more than simply changing our layout design and the paper we printed our magazines on. But after our second print issue finally came out, I was glad to see that *Varsity* was a somewhat different

magazine than what we used to know.

Thanks to our gifted art director Jennifer Kwok, the magazine was given a whole new look starting with the quirky and surreal cover featuring a UFO hovering above two groups of students in the heat of 'dem-beat' - or cheers chanting - for our first print issue, which featured cover stories on the meanings and culture of university orientation camp activities.

Staying true to the belief that we should pursue stories that mainstream media may try to avoid, one of the highlights of my time as editor were our cover stories about three groups of people - Kuomintang loyalists, Gurkhas, as well as refugees from Vietnam and other asylum seekers - largely forgotten, perhaps deliberately removed from the minds of many, after Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997.

I was on the team covering the Kuomintang story and from the long talk we had with a Nationalist army veteran, I realised there existed a time not so long ago during which

everyone in Hong Kong was free to choose which China to identify oneself with, and the so-called idea of "one China" was not always taken for granted.

I also remember how hard it turned out to be to produce a photo story on the local Muslim community if we were to include both the Hong Kong and Islamic elements in a single photo, and for every photo that we were going to publish in the spread.

Working on *Varsity* was, on the whole, a very rewarding and memorable experience. I am also happy that our efforts were recognised when we won several major prizes at an inter-university student publication award last year.

I still remember we used to joke about the fact that nobody in *Varsity* seemed to know exactly what award(s) the magazine had won even though we have always described *Varsity* as an "award-winning magazine" when sending out requests for interviews. Now, at least we know what to answer when we are asked the question.





## Victor Chan

**Varsity 2010 - 2011**

Wracking my brains for budget ideas, staying up late to finish stories, working very hard on answering all the queries from Yuen (Chan), our instructor, and definitely, the layout design which drove me crazy, these are what we V-mates experienced in our days working for *Varsity*.

Apart from these, I have a bit more to add.

I am one of Yuen's first batch of students. Both the teacher and students explored the ways *Varsity* would grow when we were green and we were passionate about improving the magazine. This later contributed to *Varsity* 2.0 and the magazine entered the multimedia age. The Editor-in-Chief, Samuel

Chan proposed to use a new type of paper and we witnessed another significant moment for *Varsity*.

Also my story about forensic scientists probably became the last piece of writing in the Business and Careers section. To me, it's rather memorable.

Going beyond the mainstream is what I think the spirit of *Varsity* is. We students are always better able to cover stories that are easily overlooked by the mainstream media.

As *Varsity* tells its own stories of the past 20 years in this special edition, it's time to recall the spirit and think of how *Varsity* will advance.

Happy anniversary!

## Phoebe Man

**Varsity 2010 - 2011**

Before writing this, I saw some posts on Facebook that people had written about meeting the editing deadline of *Varsity*. It was fun to see how they described their "love" for *Varsity* and this also reminded me of the good old days of working for *Varsity*. I never thought of being a student magazine's Chief Editor before and very luckily, *Varsity* gave me the chance.

It was great to work with all my teammates and it did bring me many unforgettable moments. Among them all, preparing for the annual *Varsity* dinner was most memorable. In order to attract more people to join the dinner, we tried to lower the cost by preparing the food ourselves. I still remember we made all the delicious food in Hua Lien Tang, Chung Chi College's only female hostel, for a whole day. Though not many people turned up in the end, it was really surprising that the proofreader (Nicola Nightingale) came. We finally knew what the proofreader looked like. (haha!)

## Piano Ho

**Varsity 2010 - 2011**

Oh please don't mention *Varsity*.

It reminds me of the most terrible memories I have ever had. Endless interviews, endless editing, and endless deadlines.

Working for *Varsity* seems - actually, it is - quite tortuous, but I have to say that I learnt a lot from it. Especially when my partners or reporters were free-riders. Free riders are actually relatively easy to deal with. The most terrible person I had to face was the Chief Editor. The Chief Editor was a person I wanted to escape from but could not as I was the Managing Editor. Don't argue with her, really, because you are going to lose and she is going to make your life MISERABLE.

But surprisingly this horrible woman became one of my best friends after I asked her to be the model on the spread of one of my stories.

Thanks to *Varsity*, I now have an annoying true friend. OMG! She is going to kill me after reading this \_\_\_\_.

**Melanie Leung**  
**Varsity 2010 - 2011**

Funnily enough, it was the ice-cream that put things into perspective for me. It was hot and humid, I was tired, and my shoulders were aching from carrying my heavy backpack around Tin Shui Wai. I was a freshman doing an interview with a mobile ice-cream vendor for my third *Varsity* story, and already I was having doubts about the point of reporting. Nearly a year into journalism school, I had felt that I was wasting my time. I was never a newsy person, I preferred novels to newspapers, and only reluctantly scrolled through news articles before quizzes. I was never a critical person either. Knowing that Gutenberg invented the printing press seemed irrelevant to my life, nor did I think it worthy to spend lots of time writing up a story only to have it dismissed by

the editors.

As my mind wandered while the vendor jabbered away, I had no idea the next 10 minutes would change my view of journalism.

During the hour-long interview with the ice-cream vendor, not a single person came to buy anything. The vendor said it was useless to try to sell her ice-cream in a busier street because officials from the Food and Environmental Health Department would accuse her of obstruction and shoo her away. To prove her point, she took her cart a couple minutes away to a busier street, and set up her stall there.

The street was at least 30 feet wide, and the people were moving around with ease. Within minutes, the vendor had already sold two ice-creams. Then, a white van

pulled up, and two officials got out and rudely ordered the vendor to move away. Genuinely curious now, I asked them how the ice-cream cart was blocking the street. The older official stood right next to the cart and said, "Can I walk through without bumping into the cart? If I have to go around it, it is obstruction." And then he sneered at me. I noticed a drop of his spit had landed on my notebook. Perhaps it was the hour spent under the glaring sun with the vendor, perhaps it was the absurdity of the whole situation, and definitely because of that drop of spit, I was incensed. My heart beat fast as I sat down to write my story. For the first time, I realized the words I wrote would largely determine how much people were going to care about this issue; and only when enough

people cared, would the government deal with the issue seriously.

My afternoon with the ice-cream vendor reporting for *Varsity* quelled my arrogance. I became blatantly aware of my ignorance of the world and issues far more serious than ice-cream carts unfairly accused of blocking the road. The fury I felt transformed into a desire to make myself better informed.

Later on, working as an editor at *Varsity*, I learned how to ask better questions and practised sorting through obscure principles, especially when working on the National Education story with my reporters.

Nothing beats the satisfaction of having your story published after many painful hours of reporting and research. Though I still have much to learn, I look forward to being a reporter.





**Gavin Li**  
Varsity 2011 - 2012

Working for *Varsity* was not just a course requirement, but an opportunity to learn to overcome challenges, especially those unexpected ones, at least to me.

My first *Varsity* assignment was a story trying to investigate the quality of the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools. My reporting partner and I interviewed some parents whose children were studying in the DSS schools, and one of them made rather negative comments about her son's school. We then tried to seek a response from the school.

After communicating with the school's representative for quite a long time, she finally arranged an interview for me with some parents. It was totally out of my expectation that the school would invite a total of eight parents to share their views with me. Some of them were even attempting to influence my writing, claiming they wanted to "help" me. Of

course, I declined their "help" politely.

The story was later published and my editor, partner and I all thought that everything was over. However, it was not the case. One of the parents I interviewed raised a complaint two and a half months after the publication of the story. His complaint was quite unreasonable and he even made personal attacks on my character. It was so frustrating for a student reporter who was still fresh and lacked experience to deal with such matters. I was very upset for quite a while.

Nevertheless, it was definitely one of my most valuable learning experiences in *Varsity*. I have learnt to stand firm despite others' attempts to influence my news writing, frustrate me or even attack my self-esteem. I am sure this experience will be very helpful to me in the increasingly difficult environment of reporting today.



**John Yip**  
Varsity 2011 - 2012

Recalling the silence in which a middle-aged fisherman wept in front of me recounting his baby son's death in an accident that happened over 30 years ago, or the insecurity within a solemn Somali as he shared how he had struggled to lead a less miserable life as a refugee in Hong Kong, I realize how inhumane, but damn fortunate at the same time, the job of a reporter is. Inhumane in the sense that we often reopen wounds and ask people to relive whatever unpleasant experiences they have had. Fortunate because we, though not always, get to witness the best of humanity. The unconditional trust that I, a nobody from a student publication, have been given is something that I can never repay. It keeps me going and reminds me that it is indeed my greatest privilege and honour to be able to hear these otherwise unheard stories, share them with at least one more person and hopefully make a difference somehow, somewhere. And for that, regardless of all the banned budgets, nightlong writing and ruthless sub-editing, I am still humbly grateful for having been part of *Varsity*.



**Carmen Shih**  
Varsity 2011 - 2012

I still remember the first budget I had passed was about glass recycling.

During the reporting, I realised how much cooperation it requires, not only from the government but also the general public to get environmental protection working. It was that particular story that kept me submitting budgets related to environmental issues. People should care.

By the time I had completed my work as a reporter for four print and two multimedia issues, I had handed in at least six "green" budgets in total, which was at least one per issue. When I ended up being an Editor-in-Chief, everyone anticipated how "green" *Varsity* would become. Actually, *Varsity* stayed engaging with diverse stories. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow editors for their hard work, persevering with me on a board with only eight people.

Yuen, thank you very much. I have learnt a lot from you; working for *Varsity* is a painful but at the same time, the most valuable time in my university life.



**Joyce Lee**  
**Varsity 2011 - 2012**

*First choice: Ubeat*  
*Second choice: Varsity*  
*Third choice: Pinpoint*

This was what I wrote on the preference sheet when I first entered CU's Journalism school, with a dream of becoming a journalist covering China news and the presumption that only the training in *Ubeat* could take me to my dream.

Just before school started, I was assigned to *Varsity*. Feeling disappointed and a step further away from my dream, I reckoned there could only be two possibilities, either my Chinese is too bad or perhaps English, too good. The teachers, however, insisted that my unfortunate, or fortunate, placement was solely because *Ubeat* was already full, and could not accept any more students.

I spent the first few weeks of my *Varsity* life envying my counterparts in *Ubeat* and

questioning my identity as a *Varsity*-er. But once I jumped into the water of reporting, I could not stop. Reporting is addictive.

Throughout my 'tangles' with *Varsity* in my first and second year, there was not one second that I was discouraged to pursue my dream. Out of the nine stories that I covered, either as a reporter or an editor, at least three are China-related. Our Multimedia (MM group) even pioneered to become the very first *Varsity* team sent to the Mainland. Being in the English stream did not stop me from doing China-related features.

My heart skips a beat every time I do reporting. *Varsity* has confirmed my passion in reporting. What I have learned is, journalism is not about language. It is about heart.

**Billy Leung**  
**Varsity 2011 - 2012**

One of the worst things about reporting, must be when your interviewees stand you up. Worse still when after waiting 15 minutes you call to remind them, only to be told they could not come. Yet, it sometimes brings an unexpected experience.

When I was working on the multimedia project in Year 2 about Foo Tak Building, which is a cluster of artists' spaces in Wan Chai, an interviewee forgot about our meeting for the second time. It was already night and most tenants there had left. We knocked on every door from the first floor, hoping that we could at least find somebody to talk to.

When we were on the ninth floor, there were two flats. In one, it looked like the tenants had moved out and the other one was an art organization. We wanted to ring the bell of the art organization but we rang the

bell of the neighbouring unit by mistake. Surprisingly, a young man opened the door and welcomed us in to talk to him after hearing our stories. The man was Roy Tsui, the founder of *Black Paper*. He had just moved in a few days before and was also very surprised someone would visit him there. We had a good interview with him and got some freebies, old issues of *Black Paper*. He shared his thoughts on a lot of things with us like art, songs in Hong Kong, his ideas and future plans for *Black Paper*. Two weeks later, we read about our interview with him in his newspaper column. He added the random chat with us that night was an example of what he liked about Foo Tak Building. I would like to add, "bak chong (白撞)" during reporting and chatting with interesting interviewees like him, is a reason why I enjoyed working for *Varsity*.





## Liz Yuen

### Varsity 2011 - 2012

*Varsity* brought me two valuable opportunities, they are my two internships. You would not believe how magical my journey was.

The first opportunity came shortly after I worked as an editor for *Varsity*. Gary Gaurav, a Hong Kong-based Indian, left an inbox message for me on Facebook. He invited me to join his magazine, *A-Desiflava* - a free publication targeting South-Asian readers. He had found me because of my work on *Varsity*. I was so thrilled!

The scene where Yuen (Yuen Chan, *Varsity*'s instructor) had read out the aspirations we had for *Varsity* in our first term popped up in my mind. In our final editing class three terms later, she read, "Liz: I want to interview more foreign people and understand different cultures."

Bingo! I worked on articles like "Islamic Culture in Hong Kong" and "Locals Who Are Not Considered Local: Hong Kong's South Asians". I enjoyed every single bit of the reporting, especially for "Islamic Culture in Hong Kong". The most unforgettable event was Eid Al-adha, the Feast of the Sacrifice. It is when muslims sacrifice their cows or lambs for God. Seeing at least 10 cows being killed and their body parts distributed to each and every family, I was overwhelmed, and to be honest, a bit scared.

After interviewing the believers, I learnt that they carried out halal slaughter by playing music and undergoing bloodletting. The feast

reminds everybody to share food with the poor and the weak. I realised that even stepping in and witnessing their rituals, we might still disapprove of their actions. Interviewing them allowed me to get a fuller picture of what was going on. I was so glad I could join their cultural events, absorb their culture and let our readers get a glimpse of their culture. I feel honoured to contribute to empowering the ethnic minorities, only to find out later, that I was also empowered as a reporter.

My second opportunity came about when I was working on the story "Dead Confusing", about illegal burial sites. It was maybe the only story idea I had managed to get approved by the editors (I felt like I'd won the lottery). What's more, it was a great chance to expose misdeeds by unscrupulous land owners, who turned an ecologically valuable tract of shell beach into an outdoor columbarium.

When I reached the beach at Tai Po, I was surprised to see several crews from TVB. I was encouraged to see *Varsity* covering a story alongside a major news organisation. I shared this little story during my TVB internship interview. I believe this story secured my internship offer. Finger-crossed for my internship this summer. I will keep everything I learnt on *Varsity* in mind and definitely do my best. May I hereby remind everybody to cherish the chances offered by *Varsity*, do not let chances slip off your fingers. Catch them if you can. Thank you *Varsity*.



# *Varsity* Alumni in the English Media

## Fiona Lau

Reuters

After graduating in 2000, I worked at the *South China Morning Post* for roughly a year before moving on to my current job. I am currently the China Editor of *IFR Asia*, a magazine which covers capital markets activities in the region under the global media group Thomson Reuters.

Being an editor in real life is very different from what I experienced and learned at *Varsity*. There are many more unexpected situations you have to deal with, and many more people you have to work with. However, the techniques of how to write a compelling story and how to write clean and tight copy are still extremely useful.

## Aries Poon

Wall Street Journal

I'm leading a team of four reporters in Taipei for the integrated bureau of the *Wall Street Journal* and *Dow Jones Newswires*. It's been two and a half years and I would say my job is fun 80 per cent of the time. Writing is fun, editing is (most of the time) gratifying, "conceptualizing" story ideas (a cliché my boss uses all the time!) with reporters is rewarding. Everyday I believe I've learnt something new. But what really make me stay in this job are its non-news elements. I finally realize people are different (you see how hopeless I was!). Instead of attempting to educate them, I have to find ways to co-exist with them without sacrificing my integrity. I also start to understand the essence of team spirit -- I can't really control my staff but I'm responsible for their output. Keeping them happy and motivated has become one of my top priorities, and somehow, that has made me a better person! (Or so I believe) So, what's wrong with the remaining 20 per cent of the time? Well, the media industry has been having a tough time for years, earnings wise. The Internet has turned news into a commodity, and it takes more creativity and effort to get people pay to read your stories. But I always tell myself: As long as I enjoy and care about what I'm doing, I will be fine.

## **Crystal Chui**

*Financial Times*

I am currently covering institutional investments behind the paywall for *MandateWire Asia*, a newswire of the *Financial Times*. My day-to-day work includes interviewing executives at funds in Australia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia and the Philippines, and from that I produce exclusive news and analysis pieces. The work is very challenging - every day I get people to talk about things they would usually be reluctant to tell, and break into markets which are not the most transparent.

The three semesters with *Varsity* gave me opportunities to hit the ground running in journalism. The whole experience is not only something to make your CV attractive, but also to prepare you for all the challenges a working journalist may face.

## **Miranda Shek**

*China Business Network*

Working in the English language media is never a glamorous task, and it is certainly not the case in mainland China. It is a rocky path and only those with much optimism and wit can aim to stand out as one of the strongest.

The environment for journalists in the Mainland is harsh and the quest for English journalists is even greater. Getting a green light to publish a credible English news article requires much persistence. You need to gather facts to convince, not only your editors that the article is solid, but also your English readers and audience must recognise that the news is relevant and true. There is a bias against mainland Chinese journalists that I keep fighting against. I have yet to find out whether there is light at the end of the tunnel.

## **Dennis Chong**

*South China Morning Post*

I was a *Varsity* reporter and editor before I graduated from JLM in 2003. That was the year SARS hit the city and I still remember my classmates and I once feared if we could actually make it to graduation! It has been a fun 10 years being a journalist and I have been lucky enough to be able to try out different areas of news in various organizations. I also feel fortunate that the university and the school of JLM have given me the professional training to do my job, as well as friends that I still frequently see.

I think one thing which is special about journalism students is that many of us were top students in our secondary schools, but we made our choice of study not because of the best prospects guaranteed. We know the working environment will be harsh and we may just get so-so pay. The willingness to endure hardship and face challenges is, however, very important as a person.

Working in the English media, I am able to see different types of people from different cultures and one thing to learn is not to judge quickly. This spirit of tolerance and thoroughness will bring one an open mind to solve problems and the ability to think outside the box.



# Words from the current crop

**Jeffrey Wong**  
*Year One Varsity Reporter*

When I was reporting for my first issue of *Varsity*, I did not think about why I was writing for the magazine aside from completing my assignment as a student reporter. But after reporting on breastfeeding in my second issue, I realized I am actually a real reporter who can make a difference.

At first, we had a problem of finding the right people to talk to. The deadline was closing in but no official departments or relevant people were willing to speak with us. Hope did not appear until we talked to a breastfeeding mothers' support group.

After they introduced us to members

of their circle, we received more than 20 calls from different mothers within an afternoon. All of them were quiet, ordinary housewives who had never been interviewed before. They told us they belonged to a minority in a society dominated by big businesses. As long as we could help them voice their opinions out, they would assist us with anything we needed in our reporting. We were the only people who cared about and were able to help them.

A sense of duty filled my heart. I will never forget the tears shed by a mother when she told us how society treats them unequally. I will never forget the deadly

silence when we were talking about the future of breastfeeding with a university professor.

Nor can I forget the moment when a mother held my hand, telling me I must get the piece published. All of these experiences reminded me I am not just a student reporter, but someone who has the potential to change society.

Being a reporter for *Varsity* is more than completing a course at the School. It is a duty to serve social justice. After this report, I feel justice does exist. And most importantly, I am one of those who can help to bring it about.

## Natalie Tsoi

*Year One Varsity Reporter*

Before I joined the *Varsity* family, my friend told me that one's work efficiency would definitely improve after working for *Varsity*. When I became a reporter, I soon realized why she said so. I could see that all the reporters were always in a race against time to finish all the work before their deadlines. Although the work is sometimes challenging, we cherish every opportunity to do reporting.

My first story was about nationalism and local consciousness. My partner and I were very frustrated when working on this story. The interviewees we approached were quite unresponsive to our requests for interviews.

Former CY Leung supporter Lew Mon-hung turned down our request for an interview, saying that he was "about to be very busy". This was just before the interview in which he made damning allegations against the Chief Executive was published.

I was rejected by another potential interviewee, a well-known pro-Beijing academic and commentator, three times in a week. At one point in our multiple exchanges, he told me he could not speak to us because there was no mutual trust or "commitment" between us. "You know about your CUHK's reputation," he said without elaborating on what he meant. On another occasion he told me that "as a student, I hope you will walk

back on to the correct path."

We turned up to knock on the door of another interviewee, Lingnan academic Chin Wan, who said he did not want to be interviewed. He did speak to us and I am glad that we didn't let the opportunity slip through our fingers.

In the course of our reporting, we also went to a protest outside Mong Kok East Station. There were many protesters and also many reporters from different media there. I saw how swiftly a reporter can work. The journalists were alert to the things happening around them, they talked to the protest organizer and then followed the crowd marching to protest. I just couldn't catch up with them.

After all, I find being a reporter fun.



*"Point Lift, Point Close"*  
May 1997 // Varsity Issue 34  
Photo by Michelle Chow

# Afterword

For a magazine to survive twenty years is no mean feat. For an English language magazine to survive twenty years in Hong Kong and still be going strong is an achievement worth celebrating. In 1993, when the first issue of *Varsity* came out, Hong Kong had three English language newspapers. *Asiaweek* and the *Far Eastern Economic Review* were published in the city and the BBC's Asia Bureau was located here. Today, the Beeb's regional bureau is in Singapore, those two magazines are no more and we have one daily broadsheet and one free daily.

As a practicum publication of the School of Journalism and Communication, *Varsity* does not need to survive on market principles. It does, however, need to remain fresh and relevant, aspire to professional standards, fulfill educational goals and be something our students are proud of.

In my admittedly biased opinion, it has largely succeeded on all these fronts, thanks to the hard work, sleepless nights, determination and talent of our student reporters and editors. But it has not been easy to achieve these goals, even harder to maintain and extend the vision of the magazine's founder, Bryce McIntyre.

Bryce conceived of a magazine produced for and by university students, concentrating on higher

education and campus life and with an eye on the media industry. Over the years, the magazine's scope has expanded to focus more on the social issues of the day. Our audience has also expanded.

In 2010, I made an agreement with *The Standard* to syndicate *Varsity's* personality profiles in the newspaper. A much wider readership can now access our People stories through the newspaper, giving our students a bigger platform to distribute their work.





When I was asked to introduce the practicum in a freshman's handbook produced by the School's student association, I wrote that *Varsity* students punch above their weight. Indeed, we have been willing to tackle big issues and big ideas, with many excellent results.

In the four years since I've been on the job, our cover stories have included such topics as sex offenders, the working poor, youth housing problems, the Kuomintang in Hong Kong and the rise of the religious right. We wrote about national education in Hong Kong's schools back in April 2011, before it became

a contentious flashpoint; we asked why young people who barely remember pre-1997 Hong Kong were nostalgic about British Hong Kong long before the issue became a hot topic in the mainstream media.

The past 20 years have seen huge changes in journalism and the skills required of journalists. Like all other publications, *Varsity* has had to change and adapt. Bryce mentioned that *Varsity* was Hong Kong's first online news publication. Yet, for some years, we languished on the technical front.

More recently, *Varsity* has made great strides to catch-up with our online presence.

Also in 2010, we relaunched the *Varsity* website and added web-specific multimedia stories to our output. It was initially a real challenge as we were all learning together, but the results have been encouraging. *Varsity*, with a team of around 20 students and 10 editors, now publishes two print editions and one online multimedia edition per term.

Nobody knows for sure what the media landscape will look like in 20 years. For the foreseeable future, *Varsity* will continue to strive to remain relevant, informative, engaged and engaging. I hope it will also be enjoyable and educational for the students

who work on it.

What I do know is that 20 years from now, *Varsity* will be an experience those working on it today will still remember, and hopefully cherish.

**Yuen Chan**



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